

HOW CAN TEN RIGHTEOUS MEN SAVE A CITY FROM DESTRUCTION?

GEN. XVIII, XIX.

We read in Job, "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Or can a man be more pure than his Maker?" (IV:17.) This exhortation of Eliphaz to Job naturally recurs to us, when we read the conversation between God and Abraham, concerning the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Did Abraham really venture to remind God of his duty, when he asked, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not exercise justice?" Did Abraham dare admonish God, when he exclaimed, "Far be it from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked?" Abraham, furthermore, implored God to spare the wicked for the sake of fifty, forty, thirty or even ten righteous men in the community. Wherein would lie the justice of such an action? Justice does not demand merely that the innocent shall not suffer; it insists, with equal force, that the wicked must not go unpunished. What would we think of an earthly judge who would refuse to pronounce sentence against a number of criminals, because of the many good citizens in the community!

To interpret this passage literally, as if a colloquy had really taken place, instead of entering into the spirit of the chapter, would be grossly unjust to the Holy Scrip-

tures. The significance of the conversation is indicated in the opening words: "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice."

"His children and his household after him" are to keep the way of the Lord, so that they may resemble God in צדקה ומשפט, in "righteousness and justice." The contemporaries of Abraham, who had known the place where the Dead Sea now stretched its waste of waters as a fertile valley, the site of populous cities, and their children, remembering the awful catastrophe, would certainly ask themselves the question: "Must not many an innocent man have suffered in the destruction of so large a number of human beings?"

Abraham did not want the way of the Lord to be judged by his contemporaries or his descendants in the light of an act of apparent injustice. The way of the Lord was to be a guide to them in their earthly career. A man's conception of his God always regulates his life. Nor can more be asked of him. If his God is unjust, he will also be unjust. Abraham's conversation makes it appear that in the doomed cities, there were not fifty, nay, not even ten, undeserving of their fate. His answer to would-be critics was, "The Judge of all the earth does no injustice. Be ye likewise on your guard against wrongdoing in your earthly careers."

Subordinate to the main idea, the manifestation of the Ruler of the universe as the God of justice, and the

significance of the Dead Sea as the everlasting memorial of his justice, various precious thoughts, which cannot but appeal to the thoughtful reader, are found in this passage. As long as there are ten, or speaking generally, a proportionate number of righteous men in a community, so long may it enjoy a prosperous existence, or the hope of amelioration of its condition be cherished. Whenever a people has succeeded in working its way from slavery to freedom; from a state of rudeness to that of civilization; or has risen from ignorance to culture; or has passed from the darkness of superstition to the realms of light; or has exchanged rabid fanaticism for respectful toleration, the achievement has not been the work of the masses; the movement did not, from its incipency, count its followers by hundreds or thousands—no, the pioneer band always consisted of a handful of noble men and women, who finally succeeded in infusing a new spirit into the people at large. Without these torches to illuminate the path of the beautiful, the true, the good, the indifferent masses, would never have made any progress; on the contrary, the baser elements in the community would have succeeded in directing the multitude into their paths. Had the one Moses and, by a generous estimate, the seventy other chosen men been taken from the six hundred thousand that went up from Egypt into the light of freedom, then, humanly speaking, Israel would have disappeared from the stage of history. Without Ezra and Nehemiah, the kingdom of Israel would probably not have arisen a second time. Had it not been for Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, Israel's Law would have died out. Had it been possible for George III to silence one hundred men like Patrick

Henry, Samuel Adams, and their compeers, the formation of the United States might have been indefinitely postponed. Even now, perhaps, we should be the subjects of Her Majesty, the Queen of England. The many prosperous communities, which we behold on every side in our land, whose activity is a source of rich blessing to the country, did not spring into life with a large number of members. They all owe their existence to a few faithful and energetic individuals. The masses merely followed their good example.

The maintenance and direction of states, cities, communities and associations, like their creation and foundation, must be set down to the credit of a few—the men spoken of in our text as Zaddikim. It would be doing a great injustice to the majority of the citizens of our city, as well as of others, to count them among the *R'shoim*, but neither can they be counted among the Zaddikim, the upholders of the community. One section of the community provides faithfully for the welfare of school and household, taking no thought for the city or country in general, for congregations, or for associations. Others, again, may take an interest in the affairs of the community, not however to benefit the community, but rather to serve their own selfish ends. The sound kernel, the vital element of the community, is composed of an exceedingly small number. It is made up of citizens of pre-eminent probity and public spirit. Were these lacking, the power of the wicked would rule the indifferent masses, and transform the most prosperous community into Sodom and Gomorrah. This is the second lesson, taught to us in the form of a conversation between Abraham and Deity—a few

worthy men may save a whole community from destruction.

Was Lot a man of this description? The testimony of the Holy Scriptures on his character is not unexceptionable. We read, "When God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and sent Lot away out of the midst of the overthrow." Lot, therefore, owed his salvation not to his own merit, but to his kinship with Abraham. It is true, he practised hospitality, but only "in the evening," as the narrative has it. He desired the strangers to rise up early, and go on their way, without attracting any notice. He conducted the travellers to his home by a side-path (סורו נא). Moreover, this incident was the first intimation that his fellow-citizens had of the difference between his mental attitude and theirs. Up to that time, he had given them no opportunity to find out that he held nobler views than they. Lot was one of those men, common at all times and places, who are good when surrounded by good influences, but who, among evil companions, maintain a timid silence, avoiding any appearance that might betray a difference between their point of view and that of the others, and hence give offence. The men that have power to save, the Zaddikim, whom Abraham had in mind, the men that could have rescued Sodom from destruction, had they been present, must have the courage, not only to harbor an independent opinion in secret, but to express their convictions openly, and to act according to them. We read of "fifty righteous men *within the city*"—not the upright man within his four walls, behind closed doors and darkened windows, not the pious man among pious men, the good

man in a community of good men, but the man that shows his piety openly "within the city," caring not what may be the opinion of those about him, caring not whether his sentiments make friends or enemies for him among those about him.

Abraham supposed that fifty such pious men were to be found in the five cities, and there was not even one! To his contemporaries and his posterity, standing with deep emotion on the brink of this dead body of saline and sulphurous water, asking, "What caused this disaster? Was it the work of a just God?" he could reply, "Yes, the justice of the eternal law, ruling in human affairs, is here manifested." Not the number of evil-doers, of weakling and indifferent citizens—they are found everywhere—caused this catastrophe, but the lack of Zaddikim, the salt of the masses, who keep human life from moral corruption. It was for the want of such men that these cities and their inhabitants perished. Sodom and Gomorrah are not the only victims of such a fate. Since their day, numberless kingdoms and cities have vanished from the earth, meeting with an end of horror. Associations have been dissolved, others drag out a weary existence, all for want of a proportionate, if small, number of men of strength of character, of noble devotion to the common welfare. The material for a continued existence was at hand, the builders were lacking. The cement was wanting to hold the members together in an existence worthy of their divine origin. The pillars that upheld the structure tottered on their foundations.

These Zaddikim do not always go about with crowns upon their heads, or decorated with orders and medals;

nor do they, in all cases, occupy pulpits and university chairs, and bear the title *doctor* or *professor*. They are sometimes plain, unostentatious citizens, who live quiet, unassuming lives, and quite unconsciously to themselves as to others, exercise a good influence upon their fellowmen. They do not always receive their reward upon earth, neither is their lot, in all cases, enviable. Frequently, indeed, they suffer more or less for their courage in differing from the world about them in opinion, in thought, in action. They frequently hear the cry, "This one man came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." You, who stand quite alone with your antiquated or radical notions concerning things human and divine, you, strange man that you are, you wish to act as our judge! Alas! There are not always angels at hand to take the part of the innovators, when attacked, and to save them. History has many a sad tale to relate of martyrs to conviction.

Every man cannot, therefore, be expected to take a bold stand, and so bring down upon himself the wrath of the multitude. Every one does not possess either the courage or the ability to carry on the fight, and indeed a great number of such bold spirits is not needed in the world. But it ought always to be borne in mind that the existence of the masses, characterized as it is by exclusive attention to their own concerns, depends upon the virtue (זכות) of a comparatively small number. Reverence is due to those capable of exertions for which we lack the necessary strength. Furthermore, what we are not strong enough to accomplish in large circles, let us seek to achieve in smaller spheres. Let each one of us make an earnest effort to become the shining example,

the Zaddik in his family, in society, in congregational life. "In the place where there are no men, strive to be a man." Let each one say to himself, "It may be that the little world of my activity needs just such as I am to influence it to pursue a moral, a pious existence, and be saved from destruction." Let us remember, that some must always be the bearers, while the others are borne along. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel, ashamed to allow ourselves to be carried by others, and to live by the merit (זכות) of other and better men. And may we, fathers and mothers, make it our highest aim to be counted among the Zaddikim, when the Judge of all the earth counts the righteous men of our city and country. May we be found among those who, like Abraham, command their children and their households to observe God's ways, to live "to do righteousness and justice."

"I THOUGHT, SURELY THERE IS NO FEAR
OF GOD IN THIS PLACE."

GEN. XX : 11.

Abimelech, King of Gerar, reproached Abraham bitterly for allowing him to come to the very brink of a great sin. Abraham excused himself, saying: "I thought, Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will slay me."

Sin, therefore, must have been discussed prior to the existence of the religion of Israel, and the fear of sin held man in check, even in the time of Abraham. Who can say how much earlier in the world's history this feeling acted as a restraining force? Sin was not, at that time, an offence against morality, a violation of a philosophical code of ethics, but an offence against Deity, and the fear of sin was the dread of the punishment that offended Deity would visit upon man. Without the fear of God, the fear of sin did not exist; where the conception of God was wanting, there was likewise no conception of sin.

In the scene of our narrative, the country in which Abraham and Abimelech came into contact with each other, there was no university, no lecture platform, no library; in fact, no book and no pulpit; neither is there any mention of a temple. The only structure spoken of as devoted to the service of God is an altar, made by

setting up a single stone. And yet men knew what is meant by "sin;" they recoiled in horror from certain acts, and recognized that toleration of them would bring distress upon king and realm.

Such was the aspect of affairs in Abimelech's tiny kingdom, four thousand years ago. The condition of Gerar was that of the entire ancient world, and the description applicable to that time holds good of the world of to-day. To the saying in the Bible: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," might be added: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of the fear of sin."

That which we term science, is of comparatively recent development; even in its incipency, it was the possession of but few men. So small was their number that they were counted, and but seven were honored with the title, "Wise Men."

What occupied the mind of man in that distant day? The intellect craves nourishment as well as the body, and its food is thought. What, then, engaged the thoughts of the individual, when the duties connected with the management of his simple household had been fulfilled? What was the common thought of the nation? For a nation must, of necessity, have a common subject for contemplation. Religion, the gods—these were the topics for the consideration of the whole people—their origin, their dwelling-place, their occupations, the objects of their love and hate, what angers them, what pleases them—about all this the wise men taught, and the poets sang. From this source was drawn thought to engage the mind, and joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain to nourish the emotions connected with home, the community, the country at large.

The idea of humanity is of even more recent origin than science. "Ethics," "philanthropy," "virtue" were unknown conceptions in that early day. They were not present to spur man on to good deeds, or to restrain him from wrong-doing. The fear of the gods alone regulated the life of the individual and of the community.

Abraham said, "'I thought, Surely there is no fear of God in this place,' and therefore, neither life nor the marriage bond is held sacred." The *Elohim* of Abimelech was, indeed, not the *Adonai* of Abraham; nevertheless, the fear of the gods, be they called *Elohim* or *Adonai*, was the only bound set to human passion, the sole protection against rude force, the one power bridling wild lust.

Out of the belief in gods grew the belief in one God, and along with the belief in one God came the idea of this God as the Father of mercy, the righteous judge, ruling according to eternal laws, as King, *i. e.*, an all-guiding Providence, and as a holy Being, *i. e.*, a God who, without thought of his creatures' service or gratitude, wills and achieves naught but good. However, in Israel, too, there was no "virtue," no system of "ethics," independent of religion. There was but one idea—the fear of the Lord. The commandments in the Bible enjoining generosity, humanity, morality, or holiness upon man are usually followed by the phrase, "אני" "I am the Lord." Thus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord."

"Thou shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord."

In the course of centuries the teachings of the God of Israel had become so completely a part of the form and

essence of civilization, that good was recognized and practised under the designation, "virtue," "morality," "truth," the bad, shunned as "vice," "superstition," "falsehood," independently of the fear of the Lord. Then, men could live good, rational lives in which the thought of the fear of God played no part whatever. With the development of *science*, the intellectual food provided was more than could be digested by a whole generation, and so entirely could the new treasures of knowledge occupy the mind that not even *one* thought remained to be bestowed upon God.

If such is the case, wherein lies the force of Abraham's assertion, that where the fear of God is lacking, one must be prepared for the worst? We must admit that there are, at present, individuals and also certain limited associations of men upon whose thought and action the fear of the Lord has no influence whatever, and with whom it is, nevertheless, safe, nay, even pleasant to dwell. In virtue and generosity, they bear comparison with any god-fearing man or woman, and hence, they do not illustrate the truth of Abraham's assertion. Let us seek to make the consequences of such godlessness clearer by means of an illustration.

In Holland, many laborers are constantly working at the dams and canals; were their care and exertions to cease even for a few years, half of the land would be swallowed up by the ocean. Many thousands, living in that country, do not lend any aid in defending the land from the threatening waters; nevertheless, they dwell in security, and partly upon the very soil that has been won by hard labor from the unwilling sea. In like manner, the synagogues, churches and religious schools

—all of which nourish the fear of the Lord—are the dikes resisting the advance of godless materialism. Picture to yourselves the state of affairs without these dikes. Think of all these buildings devoted to the service of God as closed. Imagine that there is neither church nor synagogue, and in their stead, put gymnasia or even scientific institutions. Then would appear the truth of Abraham's declaration that where there is not fear of the Lord, nothing is considered sacred, nothing is secure. The foundation would be taken from under the feet of the moral hero denying the existence of God, just as the comfort and security of the Hollanders would be a thing of the past, were the activity of the workmen at the dikes to cease.

An individual or even hundreds or thousands of men, here and there, may set up reason in place of God, or substitute the doctrine of humanity for religion; the whole body of mankind will not be injured in the least. But woe unto us, were the banner of godlessness to be raised among large bodies of men, and the fear of the Lord attacked by them in closely serried ranks! A great nation, standing upon the very height of civilization, once made such an attempt, and its defiant action did not go unpunished. How much innocent blood was there shed, because there was no fear of the Lord in the land!

It cannot be denied that even the hands of religion reek with blood; that the number of its victims can scarcely be estimated; that religions have been a curse as well as a source of blessing to mankind. But this evil thing was not the true fear of the Lord: it was malice, delusion, avarice, ignorance under the mask of religion, not pure fear of God, free from base alloy.

Yet, the evil following in the train of religion, however great it may appear to us, is scarcely to be taken into account in comparison with the misery that would ensue, were every spark of a god-fearing spirit among men to be extinguished. A dwelling-place among snakes, crocodiles, hyenas, tigers and wolves would be a paradise, compared with life among men entirely devoid of religion, of the fear of God.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of the fear of sin. None can deny that the fear of the Lord is older than science, than "virtue," than life regulated by pure reason. At the same time, the fear of the Lord is the end of the fear of sin, *i. e.*, the fear of the Lord, as a motive for shunning evil, will outlive all others. The fear of God has ever been victorious over all opposing forces, and will ever continue so. When the fury of wanton spirits is spent, when the attempts to solve the mystery of the world without a God have failed, the thinkers, worn out with their struggles, meekly and penitently return to God in their old age, and confess: "We thought that we were building a system, pointing heavenwards, a system as comprehensive and as powerful as believers teach their God to be, and we have been digging downwards, digging pits into which our thought has fallen ever lower."

Our text warns us of still another danger. Abraham thought that the fear of God did not exist in Gerar, but he was mistaken. Abimelech spoke with horror of the imminence of sin. He was affrighted even by the appearance of a god in a dream. Be, therefore, not hasty in your judgment of a fellow-man's relation to God. Not every man that loudly proclaims his belief

in God bears a truly god-fearing spirit within him, and many a one that seldom pronounces the name of the Lord reverences him the more deeply, and serves him the more eagerly. Surely, it is not good to blaspheme, but the heart cannot always be judged from the utterances of the lips. Many a one is indifferent in his service of God, because he knows that God's service is cared for. Conscious of his own upright life, he forgets him that gave us the law of good. Were he to see his faith in actual danger, he would place himself before the breach, just as the Hollander leads a peaceful existence while the weather is calm, but rushes to the dikes, when the tide seeks to destroy the land. There is nothing so arrogant as the condemnation of a whole region, an entire community, with the assertion: "I thought, there is no fear of the Lord in this land." He alone, whom we should fear, knows who truly fears and reverences him. He alone may say: "Surely, there is no fear of the Lord in this place." Man, however, has enough to occupy his attention in his *own* soul. It is sufficient for him to keep alive within himself the fear of the Lord.

EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES.

GEN. XXI : 9-15.

"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac."

It would surely have been simpler to speak of the child by name. Why not say at once, "Sarah saw Ishmael." An attentive reader of the Bible cannot, however, have failed to notice that in the description of its characters, those of good as well as those of evil fame, the name of the mother is frequently mentioned. Such is the case here. Sarah speaks of Ishmael as the "son of Hagar the Egyptian." By this designation, she indicated the evil nature of the boy, and justified the demand for his removal. She thus intimated that there rested upon him the spirit of his mother, an abandoned creature from her very childhood, the offspring of slaves in Egypt, brought to Canaan like a bale of goods, a creature without a will of her own, subject to the whims of her mistress. How could anything good be expected of her son and his education?

It is a painful thought that many human beings, Ishmael-like, are born under an evil star. Ancestral imperfections of mind and soul, acting as dominant influences in the determination of character, become the

heritage of children and grandchildren. It is difficult to bring such observations into harmony with a belief in a just and merciful God. But belief is not an easy matter; were it so, there would not be so many unbelievers, nor so many of little faith. The believer approaches questions concerning Providence, with the modest admission: "Here the domain of knowledge ends, and that of belief begins. A Providence does exist, a divine, ruling Power, whose ways, however, are too exalted for our comprehension." Nevertheless, we cannot help but see that for many men, paths for good or for evil are designated at birth, and not every one possesses the necessary strength to forsake the allotted road. The angel could well prophesy to Hagar that the son born unto her would be a wild man, whose hand would be against every man's, and against whom would be every man's hand. There are many mothers, to whom one might thus prophesy without being an angel. A Hagar will ever be the mother of an Ishmael.

Mothers, pre-eminently, are responsible for the moral condition of their children. The great men, who have been benefactors to the race in the varied situations of life, and the myriads of earnest, helpful men and women in cities and villages, whose unostentatious work in their limited circle is a source of blessing, owe their usefulness to a mother's influence which rests upon them, and inspires them to action. On the other hand, the greater share of responsibility for what is low and mean in their children rests upon the mothers as well. Many factors enter into the education of a man to lead him away from the good or the evil course prepared for him in his home; but in the training bestowed by home, and in

that element of home training determined by the character and disposition of parents, the maternal influence is of the first importance.

Do we ask when the education of a human being commences? Much sooner than is ordinarily held to be the case—long before the child is born. The choice of a helpmate is the beginning of this training, for this choice decides the character of the family to be founded. The wild Bedouins, who even to-day, render entire stretches of country unsafe, and remain implacable enemies to civilization, are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian.

Sarah said, "Ishmael must leave my house; he may no longer associate with Isaac." Here we have the second factor in man's education—association. Of what avail is the discipline of the home, even when exercised by the best of mothers; of what avail is a school though conducted by the most capable and conscientious of teachers, against the mighty stream of life which flows threateningly around the quiet home? The mother's mild words, the wise advice of the father, and the earnest discipline by both, can have but little force against the power of visible example in the world without. "Example is stronger than precept." Example often insinuates itself into the heart, upon whose hardness entreaty and solemn warning can make no impression. The character which father and mother have labored hard to form is frequently altered, ruined or remodelled by society. However, this change is not always for the worse; frequently, indeed, it proves a true blessing.

Parents send their children to school, and believe them in good keeping. It is true, there they receive

from their teachers the knowledge necessary for them throughout life, but in their associations with the pupils, they learn both good habits and evil ways. Frequently, the advantages of the instruction of the former are outweighed by the disadvantage of the evil influence of the latter. In many a one, the seed of moral ruin has been planted in an institution of learning; there, he has learnt how to bring down his good parents with sorrow to the grave. Sermons with illustrations from real life are preached to them on the play-ground, in the servants' hall, in the workshop, in the counting-rooms. How the remembrance of your words, good parents and teachers, pales in the presence of the living example! In training your children, it is, therefore, not the smallest part of your duty to keep far from the innocent the poison of evil example. "Cast out this bondwoman and her son!" Remove from your children's vicinity all that are morally unsound, from the child's nurse to the frivolous dandy that frequents your house, and shrink not from ridding yourself of hoary age, if its baseness is likely to corrupt your pure sons and daughters.

"And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's eyes, because of his son."

Here we have the third factor in education. Father and mother must act in harmony with each other in the training of their children. Better no education at all than that father and mother should work in opposite directions.

Abraham, doubtless, possessed authority enough to make his will prevail in his house. He could not see that any harm would come to Isaac from Ishmael's continued stay in his home. He felt severely the separa-

tion from his son, but a divine voice cried to him: "In all that Sarah may say unto thee, hearken unto her voice." Act in harmony with the mother of the house.

The *discipline* of children and the *education* of children are two different things. Discipline is established in cases in which an energetic father guides the reins of authority in conjunction with a passive mother; or again, in which an energetic mother stands by the side of an insignificant father. The children are well disciplined as long as they feel the restraints of home government. As soon as they think themselves free, they are different beings, and follow different impulses. If, however, father and mother are at one in zeal and purpose, then we have true *education*, then the spirit of the parents informs the character of the children. The house in which children are *disciplined* is like a well-regulated clock, which keeps time accurately as long as it is wound, but stops when the motor power of the spring is no longer active. The house in which children are *educated* is not moved by mechanism, but animated by a soul. Though the parents have long been at rest, or though, if alive, they no longer guide their children's footsteps, still their noble work will continue to bear fruit.

Finally, we must consider the moral value of the educational method pursued in Abraham's home. The purpose of sending away Ishmael, the removal of an evil influence, was good, but what can be said of the means employed? It is true, the circumstances of the time did not permit Abraham to send wife and child to the railway station, and to secure for them comfortable places in a palace car, in which they might journey in safety to Egypt, but surely he could have devised a more hu-

mane method of carrying out the harsh measure. It is highly displeasing to us to see him show the woman and her child the door, saying to them, "Here are bread and a skin of water. Take them and find your way through the desert into distant Egypt as best you can." In our day, too, there are men that do not treat their own kinspeople kindly, but they are not praised for their behavior, and surely not respected; under certain circumstances, indeed, they are severely called to account for their actions.

In our text, however, the occurrence is described as if quite natural and proper; in fact, the seal of divine approval is set upon it.

This point in the narrative leads us up to the fourth factor in man's education—time and place. Man is the child of his century, and as the "heir of all the ages," he constitutes mankind. Four thousand years and thousands of miles lie between us and the events of our narrative. Abraham was a child of his century—the twentieth since creation, according to Biblical calculation, just as we are children of our century, the sixtieth since creation, according to the same method of reckoning. Abraham was a child of the Orient; we are children of Europe and America. Surely, we have learnt something in these four thousand years, especially in a zone more favorable to culture. And we have learnt and been taught much that is good and noble, which was unknown to Abraham and the other patriarchs. The spiritual achievements of the four thousand years of the education of mankind can nowhere be more clearly seen than in the legal enactments about the position and estimation of woman in the marriage relation.

The treatment of Hagar and her child, as the child of a slave, four thousand years ago, in the Orient, was normal, in keeping with the culture of a formative period. To-day, in the midst of the culture of Europe and the countries settled by emigration thence, such action would be inhuman, deserving of punishment.

"He whose actions find favor in the sight of the best of his contemporaries, lives for all time," says the poet. We can demand no more of man than that he should rank among the best of his time. As such, Abraham and Sarah will always be deeply revered by us. But woe to the world, were there no times, nobler in their influence than the Abrahamic period; no ideas of morality, purer and nobler than those amid which the patriarchs and the other Biblical heroes lived and labored! In spite of their deficiencies, which we need take no pains to deny, the ancients gain in our esteem, when we remember the deficiencies of their teacher—the time in which they lived. We, however, in consideration of the fact that teacher Time has, since those days, gained so much in the matter of knowledge of the good and the right, must demand greater things of ourselves.

“LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.”

GEN. XXII.

“God tempted Abraham!” Did the Omniscient, then, not know what would be Abraham’s decision? To lead a man into temptation, deliberately to place sin in his path, is considered unworthy of a mere mortal—how can we, then, ascribe such an act to God? Let us devote our attention to this and other peculiar expressions in a chapter of the Bible that has always been held in high honor by us.

The oldest and most highly venerated prayer of the Christian Church, its show prayer, so to speak, is the Pater-noster. It would be highly improper for me to send forth, from this place, a hostile criticism of anything held sacred by another religious community, were it not that, first of all, learned Israelites have, with much labor, traced each part of this prayer to Jewish sources. Again, many Israelites look upon it as not merely harmless, but of surpassing merit, and it is not at all displeasing to them to have their children join in the prayer in the devotional exercises of the public schools, and finally, I shall really—to use a colloquialism—be minding my own business, since one part of the prayer under criticism is to be found in our own liturgy: ואל תביאנו לא לידי נסיון “Lead us not into temptation.”

God *did* lead Abraham into temptation. It cannot be gainsaid. According to our sages, he tempted him not only *once*, but even *ten* times.

When the Children of Israel were in the desert, God "led them into temptation." The Bible repeats this assertion again and again with great emphasis. David certainly understood the art of praying, as but few others, and he makes the direct appeal, "Try me and prove me."

A prayer for immunity from temptation, then, finds no support in the Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, to come into God's presence with such a petition seems a violation of the spirit of the Bible.

Long after the death of the founder of Christianity—though at not so late a period that a sharp line of demarcation was drawn between Jew and Christian, between Jewish and Christian literature, as was to be the case afterward—Abba Areka formulated the prayer, לא לירי נסין "Lead us not into temptation!"

The Church did not borrow this phrase from the Synagogue. It is more probable that Abba Areka conceived this supplication under the influence of the ecstatic, the plaintively sentimental atmosphere surrounding the new sect. We find other traces of the familiarity of this great teacher with the apocryphal books, and also that he did not hesitate to copy from them without stating his sources.

The whole prayer of which the phrase under discussion is a part breathes the Christian dogma of the subjection of the will, and of grace as a means of salvation:

"Teach me to know thy law; lead me in thy precepts. Let me not go astray. Suffer me not to fall into temptation or disgrace. Let wicked impulses gain no power

over me. Keep far from me all evil associations; and let all my powers learn to serve thee."

Breathes there through this prayer the spirit of our strong, sound and rational belief? our idea of God and of the dignity of his morally free children? No, forgive me, Abba, thou great and pious teacher, no Israelite can repeat thy prayer in sincerity! It is not a growth from holy Israelitish soil. The twigs and leaves extend into the field of our pure faith, but the trunk is rooted, if not in a rank soil, at least in mould in which doctrines concerning God and human nature foreign to us are fostered.

God does lead us into temptation! Of Abraham's temptations only ten are recorded. Fortunate Patriarch! Our temptations mount up into the thousands. No day passes in which they do not assail us. Certainly, temptations assail us, but how is it with our power of resistance? Most certainly, we, too, withstand them. He must be, indeed, a weak creature who, in the whole course of his life, has not found within himself the strength to resist temptation at least ten times.

Wherein would lie the strength and the excellence of virtue, if the temptation to yield to other inclinations did not have to be resisted? Would self-restraint be a virtue, were it not for the temptation to yield to desire? And where would be the merit of piety, were it not for the temptation to forsake it, and follow in the seductive path of worldliness?

Among the earliest passages in the life of the first human pair recorded in the Holy Scriptures is the account of the temptation which preceded the first sin: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for

food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes," etc. Was not that a temptation? Sin always appears to us in an attractive guise, challenging our attention, while virtue, unassuming in appearance, rests quietly in the corner, alluring none, waiting to be wooed. The first temptation is placed beside the first duty. Duty and temptation are of the same age.

He that prays, "Lead us not into temptation!" asks that God change the order of nature, the very plan of creation; that he make man cease to be a man, and change him either into an angel or a brute, neither of whom knows temptation, and is, therefore, also incapable of virtue.

Let us understand very clearly that God does place temptation in our path, from morning until evening, from evening until morning, from youth to old age, from our earliest awakening to consciousness till the last spark of life dies out within us. The child is tempted to gratify its sweet tooth, to play during school-hours, to tell falsehoods. The youth and the maiden are assailed by temptation in a different form. The man and the woman, in the strength of their years, are likewise tried, and even old age is not safe from folly, *i. e.*, from temptation. Prayer is here of no avail. "Help yourself!" is the admonition. Every prayer with such an object in view is an "idle prayer." Resistance to temptation constitutes the moral element in life, and lends grace to man.

Remember, O rich man! your wealth is a temptation to luxury, to arrogance, to idleness. A temptation assails you in the method of gaining riches, and in the method of disposing of them. Wealth will be a test as to whether you are to rule money, or to be its slave.

And to you, poor man, poverty is a trial. Prove that a great soul can exist in an humble hut ; that you can preserve a heart pure and noble, even in want.

Beauty is likewise a temptation to its possessor. Many a one, in the consciousness of this great gift of nature, wastes his years in frivolity, and in the care of the beautiful shell, neglects the moral kernel.

Intellectual power is no less a temptation. Frequently the man of average intellect achieves a higher development in morality, in well-being, in usefulness, than his more richly endowed brother, whose very genius proves his ruin.

Whatever be the fortunes of your life, be they pleasant or adverse, say to yourself, " This is a temptation. I must summon up all my strength to resist it."

Whoever has passed a difficult examination before strict judges knows what heart-felt bliss was his, when the hours of anxiety were over. A like blissful feeling is ours, when after a day of severe trial, our conscience assures us that we have come forth victorious from honest battle.

In connection with temptation, one need not think of murder and homicide and other capital crimes. Small are the temptations which glide through our lives like shadows. They constantly surround us, poisoning existence with their stings, in our business activities, in our calling, in our domestic intercourse, in our friendship, in our appetites, in the use of our tongues, etc.

Verily, God does tempt us. Let us remember that at all times. Yes, he tempts us, and therefore we rank above the brutes, and, if we resist, above the angels.

In this point, however, we must not imitate God. We

must not lead a man into temptation; we must not place a stone in the path of the blind. When man deals thus by his fellow-man, he is not tempting him, he is leading him astray.

If you fawn on the base man, and praise the sinner; if you flatter the rich and powerful; if, by pomp and show, you attract attention to yourself, and give occasion for extravagant imitation, then you are leading your neighbor into temptation, you are misleading him.

CONFLICT OF DUTIES.

GEN. XXVII.

Isaac had grown old, and he felt that the time had come for setting his earthly affairs in order. His most precious possession was the blessing which he had received from his father, and which, in turn, he intended to transmit to his first-born and favorite. Out-witted by Rebecca, he laid the blessing upon the head of Jacob.

The memory of Rebecca is sacred to us. She is one of our pious mothers in Israel, and it would grieve us sorely to be compelled to look upon her in an unfavorable light, but truth and the virtue of truthfulness among men are also holy, even holier than the memory of Rebecca. In what light must this narrative of the Scriptures be regarded, so that full justice may be done to truth, without detracting from the character of our revered Mother Rebecca?

A collision is one of the incidents of life that so often make existence unpleasant; frequently, indeed, involve loss of life. Physical collisions, in which two bodies coming from opposite directions strike against each other, are of daily occurrence. Sometimes there is even danger that our planet may collide with a comet whirling towards us through space. There is another kind of encounter, an invisible and noiseless one, in which neither bones nor muscles suffer injury, but which is,

nevertheless, quite as disastrous in its effects. Spirits come into conflict with each other, and in the course of the struggle temper becomes heated. Clashing interests meet on the narrow path of life, and obstinately push on with diametrically opposite ends in view. Ideals of the good, the true, the beautiful are dragged down into the whirlpool of stern realities and the barren prose of life; as when, for example, the young wife, with her ideal of a "knight without reproach," and the young husband, with his dream of fair angels, stand before each other as they really are—reality seeming to mock pitilessly at the images created by fancy.

The moralist's task is an easy one: he preaches moderation and self-restraint. There is, however, still another sort of conflict, in which even moderation and the extreme of self-control are ineffectual; that is, when there is a conflict of duties.

Two conflicting duties, of which the one can be performed only at the expense of the other, may claim our attention at the same time.

Let us make this proposition clearer by some examples.

A married couple may have the choice between peace and amity in their own home, on the one side, and the preservation of friendly relations with parents, who may be hostile towards one of them, on the other. An Israelite may have to decide between living strictly according to the dictates of his conscience, and his and his family's temporal welfare, or their very existence. It may happen that in fulfilling the duty of self-preservation, we are forced to act in violation of the demands of love of country and of our fellow-man. The elder Brutus acted

as judge in the case against his son, who had been guilty of treason towards Rome. Here, there was a conflict between the father and the judge in *one* person. The younger Brutus, one of the murderers of Cæsar, his friend and benefactor, had to decide between the duty of gratitude, on the one side, and his duty towards the community, on the other.

We, too, in our days, may have to choose between respect for the written law of the land, and regard for the higher law—the eternal one—of reason and morality.

Our revered Mother Rebecca found herself in a similar position.

Happy the woman that can look up to her mate as to her superior, the director of the household, the guide and teacher of her children! Unenviable is the lot of her who has to direct without assistance the affairs of the household, and the training of the little ones. The strong women are not the happiest women. So unenviable a lot was Rebecca's; she had to bear Isaac's share of life's burdens as well as her own.

Isaac exercised blind authority in the household, worse for Rebecca than if there had been no one but herself to appeal to. As it was, his power was but a useless and disturbing element. She knew well the wild, untamed nature of her older son, and could picture to herself his wretched future. And to him his father was willing to entrust the traditional blessing of the family and the welfare of future generations!

The children of our day also prize highly the blessing of their parents, but not so much from a belief in its efficacy, as from a feeling of reverence for their parents, and for the assurance it gives them that they have per-

formed their duty to their loved ones, and have given them pleasure. In ancient times, however, a blessing from the mouth of the father was God's voice. The blessing hand of the father was the hand of fate, and Isaac was going to err so far as to lay his hand upon Esau's head! Was it not clearly the mother's duty to interfere? Truly, such was her duty, but she was also under a moral obligation towards the infirm and blind old man. Was it proper to distress the unhappy, aged father? Would it be right for her to open his eyes to the true character, the unworthiness of his favorite, his first-born? There was no hope of amelioration, for Jacob and Esau were no longer children. Esau was a married man. Indeed, according to the reckoning of the Bible, the brothers must have been sixty or seventy years old at the time. The truth would have broken Isaac's heart; it is even questionable whether he could have been brought to look upon it as the truth. Men, otherwise extremely sharp-sighted, are frequently afflicted with an incurable blindness to the qualities of their own sons. In this case, then, there was a struggle between conflicting duties. At the expense of truth, Rebecca secured the father's blessing to the proper person.

I am far from believing that we should set up as a rule always to be followed, when the straight path does not lead to the good end, choose the crooked one; if unalloyed truth has no prospect of gaining a victory, choose equivocation and cunning. In such cases, every one must be a law-giver unto himself; in the struggles of conscience, he must be his own adviser.

Make this a rule of life, build your philosophy of life

upon it as a fundamental principle, "I will be true in thought, speech and action. I will allow nothing to cloud the honesty of my words and deeds." But do not lose sight of the fact that we dare not fulfil even our duty without testing the wisdom of our course.

In over-zealous and one-sided practice of duty, in unswerving attention to the behests of stern conscientiousness, we may, perhaps, be treading a path of duty that is paved with sin, with disregard of other duties. Our sages call this attaining a desirable end on the path of sin.

Test the worth of everything—even of the virtue of truthfulness, the very corner-stone of all the virtues. Examine everything in the light of place, time and circumstances. In your criticism of your fellow-man, be not too ready to stigmatize every neglect of duty as absolutely bad. Remember, there is frequently a conflict of duties, in which the one must be subordinated to the importance of the other. Perchance, the neglect of the duty apparent to you may be the price paid for performing another—a more important—obligation, of whose existence you are entirely unaware.

Let every good mother give thanks to her Creator, if her household is so constituted that she stands before her spouse and her children as a pattern of strict truthfulness and uprightness. Should a mother, however, believe that her position requires her to follow the path of duplicity, then may the reasons for her action be of so urgent and holy a nature, as were those of our revered Mother Rebecca, blessed be her memory!

TEMPERAMENT.

GEN. XXVII : 41.

"Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father will be at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." Commenting upon this phrase in the Scriptures, our sages say, "Esau spoke *in* (בלבו) his heart; thus all evil men speak and do. We read in the Psalms, 'The fool says *in* his heart,' Jeroboam spoke *in* his heart, Haman spoke *in* his heart. They are all governed by their hearts, while good men control their feelings; therefore, it is said 'Hannah spoke *to* (literally *on*, על-לבה) her heart,' 'David spoke *to* his heart,' and thus also did Daniel express himself, imitating their Creator; for the Bible says, 'God spoke *unto* his heart.'"

God, the Creator, alone has power to create; man can merely modify what has been given him, using it for good or evil purposes. As it is not in his power to create, so also he is unable to annihilate anything existing according to nature's laws. He may work havoc and ruin, he may be the author of unspeakable evil, but annihilation is beyond his power.

Man is born with a certain disposition, which frequently proves a most troublesome factor in his education, both at home and at school. A man's nature is the work of creation, and cannot be destroyed. Education, therefore, must not seek to stifle nature, but rather

attempt to develop it into character. Jacob and Esau form a case in point. They were endowed, by nature, with different dispositions—"the children struggled within" Rebekah. Jacob was, by nature, a cool, deliberate thinker. Esau was wild and excitable; guided by impulse in his good deeds as well as in his evil ones. Their widely different qualities were revealed in their choice of a vocation. Jacob's quiet shrewdness inclined him to cattle-raising; his brother's wild courage selected the bow and arrow as a means of obtaining a livelihood. Esau is described to us as coming home from a hunt, excited and very much fatigued. Surely, the paternal larder, his mother's kitchen, might have supplied him with food, had he but asked for it. However, with the impatience, characteristic of such a nature, he insists upon eating the meal prepared for his brother. For this privilege, he resigns his birthright. He eats and drinks, laughing all the while; he had satisfied his heart's desire—the desire of his master, for his heart controlled him completely. But when his father, although ignorant of the compact between the brothers, bestowed the blessing of the first-born upon Jacob, then Esau's heart was heavy, and his lament over the loss of his privileges was commensurate with his animal spirits upon resigning them to his brother. He complained that Jacob had cheated him out of his birthright. And in his heart he said, "The days of mourning for my father will be at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." If, however, the blessing under discussion was worth a contest, Esau ought to have considered that it would effectually shield Jacob from any evil that he might plot against him; but by virtue of his temperament, he lay at the

mercy of his feelings. Again, we are told that his choice of wives grievously embittered the life of his parents. His unfortunate choice was the act of his wild feelings, entirely uncontrolled by reason. The teachings of morality, the suggestions of prudence, consideration for the feelings of his parents counted as nothing against the wild tumult in his heart. In one of his good moments his heart was moved by the sorrow of his parents, and he added a third wife to the two so displeasing to them. Finally, he is pictured to us nursing in his heart wrath, which has been accumulating through twenty-two years of separation, and, with four hundred men at his back, moving towards his brother, whose blood he is bent upon shedding. Instead, tears of emotion flow in profusion. He kisses and embraces his brother, lying upon the heart that he had purposed to pierce with his steel, and speaking to Jacob in the soft, loving tones proper to brotherly intercourse. Here, again, he acted as his heart prompted him. He was completely under the control of his heart. In one moment, the venomous poison of hatred within him was transformed into the wine of love.

In Jacob's life, on the other hand, we find evidences of thoughtful deliberation rather than of rash impulse. Jacob does not speak *in* his heart; he speaks *to* his heart; he is master of his heart, not its slave. These children, so entirely different in temperament, were the offspring of the same house, of the same father and mother; even more than this, they were twins. What a sad picture of family life is here presented to us! One of these sons is compelled to flee the paternal roof in secret, so destitute of means that he bears with him

naught but the staff in his hand, and is forced to spend a night under the open sky. The other remains at home, at variance with his mother, and nursing thoughts of murder in his heart. Can the parents be blamed for their own and their children's unhappiness? Esau's temperament was ever the same from birth; so, too, Jacob's. Esau's mother could make no peaceful shepherd of him, nor could Jacob's father train him to be a bold, reckless hunter. Man cannot annihilate. He can merely mould and modify natural endowments. Disagreeable as may be the consequences which they entail upon us throughout life, they cannot be suppressed or destroyed. Those traits of Esau's nature, which were especially objectionable to his mother, she mistook for malice, and her heart turned against him. She thought that Esau lacked but the will to be like Jacob. Isaac, again, considered the qualities displeasing to him in Jacob as unmanly and deceitful cunning, and his love for his son gradually cooled. "Why is he not like Esau?" he asked. The divergent opinions about Jacob and Esau, held by their parents, are still current in the world. Pious Judaism loves Jacob, and hates Esau. The best possible construction is put upon Jacob's actions, while Esau is denied all good qualities. Another class of Bible readers, again, shows a decided preference for Esau; they attribute to him knightly qualities, while in Jacob, they see an artful knave, wanting in brotherly feeling. Both the parents and the critics of the brothers take it for granted that all human beings, if such be their will, can pattern themselves or be patterned after the same model of virtue. And when Esau fails to be like Jacob, as it was his mother's desire

he should be, or Jacob, in growing up to be unlike Esau, does not meet with his father's wish, the boys' will is declared to be at fault. Had Esau made the greatest effort to please his mother, or had Jacob done all in his power to comply with his father's wish, neither could have been successful; Esau could not have made a Jacob of himself, nor Jacob an Esau. Their natures were different, and natural inclination cannot be destroyed. Such is the experience of parents with several children, and of teachers to whose care a whole school is entrusted. Children cannot all be modelled after the same pattern; both parents and teachers must take disposition into account in their work of education. Not that nature is to be allowed to pursue its course unchecked, any more than it should be forcibly suppressed! By means of education, disposition ought to be elevated into character; it should be placed on a foundation of morality, so that man may not be the slave of his emotions, but that his emotions may be subordinate to him and his intelligence.

The educator's most difficult task is to find the method appropriate to the nature of each child in a home or a school, and to apply it so skilfully that the children may not notice the differences in their education. The problem is so difficult that we parents ought not to be too severely censured if we fail to solve it perfectly in the training of each of our children. Were not Isaac and Rebecca unsuccessful in their efforts? It is true, we can see a special reason for their failure. The parents, themselves, were not at one in the education of their children. Under these circumstances, Esau's untamed savagery and Jacob's artfulness are in nowise remarka-

ble. Jacob leaned toward his mother, while Esau was more attached to his father. Miserable discord ensues when the two guides do not confront the children as *one* being, *one* thought, *one* heart and *one* head; when appeal is made to the one from the other; when children use one parent as a shield against the other; when the one smiles, while the other storms; the one permits what the other prohibits; the one assents, and the other refuses; or, even when the opposition of the one side to the activity of the other be but negative.

Let us parents mark well the dreadful words of the son, whom his father had spoilt and his mother did not love because of his disposition: "When the days of mourning for my father come, then will I slay my brother Jacob." Let us so train ourselves and our children that they may not, like Esau, like Jeroboam, like Haman, speak *in* their hearts, the seat of unbridled nature, but *to* their hearts, like Hannah, like Job, like Daniel, like God himself, according to the words of the Scriptures, which read, "And the Lord spoke unto his heart."

DOES MAN NATURALLY IMPROVE WITH AGE?

GEN. XXXI.

What a contrast the picture of Jacob's departure from the home of his childhood, drawn for us at the beginning of the portion, presents to the scene depicted at the end, the description of his home-coming, the subject of our Biblical selection this morning!

In the account of Jacob's departure from the paternal roof, a fugitive, bearing with him naught but the staff in his hand, we read that when night overtook him on his journey, he laid him down under the open sky, and slept the sweet sleep of youth. Twenty years later, grown to be a rich man, he complains "sleep has departed from my eyes." Upon leaving home, he dreamt of angels, of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, of God standing beside him. Twenty years later, upon returning to the home of his youth, he dreams of his flocks, of rams and goats. At the beginning of his journey, he declared himself satisfied with "bread to eat, and raiment to put on," and these things were given him in abundance as the fruit of his labor. Now, however, he is no longer content with these simple blessings. He says, מתי אעשה גם-אנכי לביתי "I must also provide for the future of my house."

Having become an inmate of his uncle's house, he

makes light of serving seven years twice over in order to gain the beloved of his heart. This same man, of warm feeling and poetical imagination, we see, in the Biblical narrative read this morning, grown twenty years older, and in the very prosaic situation of contemplating a stroke of business, accomplishing his end by the device of the ring-streaked rods!

In presenting so sharp a contrast between youth and old age, Jacob's life is not anomalous, it merely illustrates the *natural* development of a man in the course of years; it accentuates the difference between the sentiments of the young and of the old: idealism in youth, the practical side of man's nature developing with increasing years; poetry at life's entrance, prose constantly growing more prosaic at the other end of our earthly existence; in youth, self-sacrifice, generosity, living and expending for the pleasure of the moment, weaving rosy dreams of the morrow, as the years go by, selfishness and calculation, distrust of the future. The belief is erroneous that man *naturally* grows better with years; that the spirit approaches nearer a state of perfection; that man dies better than he was when born. Every man grows more *knowing* with age; his intellect expands; he becomes richer in experience, the necessity of adapting himself to existing circumstances grows ever more urgent; through practice, he becomes more and more an adept at dealing with persons and contingencies according to their natures. Even though he grow no wiser, prudence comes to every man with increasing years, but he does not inevitably grow better with time; by a natural development, indeed, he changes for the worse.

If impulsive youth commits a folly, if a young heart

loves rather too well than wisely, we may always plead youth in extenuation of the fault; the German saying, with years alone comes sense, may serve to assure us that all will yet be well. If, on the contrary, the conduct of a *young* man be cruel, heartless, uncharitable, unchivalrous, avaricious, envious and spiteful—then, indeed, it is useless to seek comfort in the thought, “These faults will disappear in time; this is the way of youth.” No; it is not so! These qualities will only become more and more marked with increasing years. An evil-hearted youth will surely develop into a still more evil-hearted man. Age never corrects faults of the heart. If man desires to be good and constantly to grow better—and such both ought to and can be his aim—he must seek earnestly to preserve in age the treasure of his youth, the good impulses of his heart. The root of all the good and noble qualities of the heart lies in our youth. It is the privilege of age to nourish this root, to make it send forth strong and enduring shoots. Therefore, there is no religion of reason. Reason can rely on itself for support; the heart, on the other hand, craves the help of religion. Religion appeals to the heart alone. Its office it is to guard and foster the emotions of the heart, so that the innate love of the good may not wither through neglect. Religion cannot *im-plant* good in the heart, but it can rouse and stimulate the good already in existence. It can fan the spark of nobility into a flame. It may guard against evil influences, and so, with advancing years, the heart may grow purer and better.

Since, as far as qualities of the heart are concerned, youth is *naturally* better than age, since the child has a

more tender heart than the old man, the rational training of children, the training that will make good men and women of them, does not consist in teaching many maxims of morality, but in exercising strenuous care to keep baneful influences at a distance. Parents and teachers must be untiringly vigilant over their own actions, lest they thoughtlessly reveal weaknesses, which cannot fail to produce an effect like blighting mildew upon the heart of the child. The harm thus done can scarcely be made good by subsequent preaching and moralizing, by reproof and punishment. If parents take great pride and pleasure in the precocious cleverness of their children, they may, by stimulating their activities, by conversation and discussion, aid such early development. It is, however, questionable whether the intellect thus reaps permanent good results. He who arises too early feels worn out when the strength of him who has enjoyed sufficient rest is at its height. But as far as the qualities of the heart are concerned, an early development of cleverness is certainly harmful. Let the children be childlike as long as they are children in years. Feed them on worldly wisdom with a spoon; do not overwhelm them with it by the bucketful. Do not hasten to make gentlemen of your boys, and ladies of your girls scarcely out of the cradle. Do not lay upon them too soon the yoke of etiquette, and still less, the harness of trade. An hour spent in play is much more effective in developing mind and body, as well as in fostering the pure and natural content of childhood, than all show and finery, than precocious chatter and worldly wisdom. The fermenting juice must be allowed to rest, if good wine is to be made of it. Unspoil chil-

dren are easily satisfied, and need but little for their sum of happiness—like Jacob, in the days of his youth, raiment to put on, enough to eat to satisfy hunger, and the enjoyment of the dream of life by indulging in sport and gaiety. Children, clad in magnificent garments, and decked with jewels are not only hindered in their childish games by a regard for their fine clothes, but when they arrive at the period of self-consciousness, they do not dream of angels passing to and from heaven; their unchildlike visions are of show and vain display.

At length, whatever we may do, arrives the time in the life of every individual, just as it came in Jacob's life, when a serious question presents itself for solution: "I must provide for my future and the future of my house." Idealism, generosity and lovely dreams of angels cannot found a house, neither will they alone enable a man to preside over it honorably. Sagacity must be quickened and brought into action; but in the struggle, hold fast to your childlike nature. Do not degenerate into a soulless threshing-machine, busied only with gathering the grain. In the midst of labor, preserve a cheerful spirit; let tender feeling exist side by side with sharpness of insight; in careful and minute investigation and research, keep your childlike faith in God and his Providence. A forward, worldly-wise child is not an agreeable phenomenon, but the sight of a man, hoary of head, yet young in heart, is most pleasing; an old head above a heart beating with youthful enthusiasm, a grave, hard-working man, occupied with the sober cares of business, who, when he dreams, unlike Jacob in his prosaic, old age, is not visited by visions of flocks and herds, but still beholds heavenly apparitions stealing about his couch.

HUMILITY.

GEN. XXXII, XXXIII.

Filled with dread and anxiety, Jacob journeyed towards his home. It was no idle, spectral fear that made him tremble. Esau was moving towards him with four hundred men. For twenty long years had anger been boiling in Esau's bosom, wrath gnawing at his heart-strings. At last, the hour was at hand, when he might pluck the sweet fruit of revenge. What means did Jacob adopt for his protection? Our sages include them in three words דורון תפלה ומלחמה gifts, prayer and war. First, he sought to allay his brother's wrath with *gifts*, then he turned to God in *prayer*, and finally he prepared himself for the worst by getting ready for *combat*. Esau, however, with knightly courtesy, refused the gift; matters did not come to such a pass that it was necessary to fight; and whether to prayer is to be attributed the favorable outcome of the meeting, God alone can know. In the ordinary course of events, God helps man by giving him strength to help himself. Jacob, surely, held this belief, or he would have been satisfied to pray, and would not have sought other means of rescue as well. What was it, however, that cooled Esau's burning wrath? What changed his bloody intentions so suddenly into kind, fraternal feelings? It was the friendly word, the fraternal tone and the humble

Brave honest men do not work for

approach of his brother. The warmth of Jacob's greetings, his modest speech had already thawed slightly the ice-crust about the heart of his wrathful brother. When, however, the brother upon whom his father had laid the blessing of the head of the family, came into his presence, bowing himself to the earth seven times, then the icy crust gave way, all the brotherly feeling, so long repressed, rushed forth. Gifts, it is true, are a mighty lever. Gifts can buy worthless rabble without limit, and even win the sympathy of better men. A gift to the needy is a true kindness, and to the rich, it is a pleasant mark of esteem. Combat and bravery subdue cities and countries, found states and kingdoms, and strike down those that neither bend nor yield. But more effective than the richest gift, more agreeable to the spirit than the finest offering, more powerful than the strongest arm, more victorious than steel-clad valor, is the soft tongue, the mild speech, the well-chosen word. He that humbles himself conquers him before whom he kneels. The meek one himself becomes the victor.

Esau, the man of the sword, the experienced warrior, skilled in arms, rushes forward with four hundred confederates at his back, who merely await his signal to draw their blades, and speed their arrows. A helpless shepherd approaches, followed by trembling women and children. The shepherd, however, bows himself to the earth seven times, and the weapons fall to the ground; a brother lies locked in a brother's tender embrace. The weak shepherd was the conqueror; the mighty Esau, the vanquished one. Seven obeisances had sent four hundred and one swords back into their sheaths.

A heavy burden fell from the heart of Jacob; moun-

Gratitude or riches

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in battle
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HUMILITY.

157

tains of oppressive care were removed from the spirits of his beloved ones. The blackness of night was changed into laughing sunlight. On the part of Esau, the viper of anger, the serpent of hatred, the hyena of revenge, which had gnawed incessantly at his heart, and torn his very entrails, were suddenly transformed into dove-like tenderness and the patience of a lamb. He had set out on this expedition with murderous intent, and he retraced his steps, a kind and loving brother. What magical power had wrought this wonderful and rapid change? What is the name of the talisman? Humility! This is the magic spell!

It is eighty years since our own Benjamin Franklin recommended this talisman to youth as a means to success. It is four thousand years since Jacob tested its power.

I well know that this Israelitish method of stooping in order to avoid a blow is entirely out of harmony with Hellenic or Teutonic ideas. Greeks, Romans and Teutons alike look with contempt upon the bowed head of humility. To bow seven times is a sevenfold manifestation of cowardice and servility. According to their conception of honor, Jacob and his followers should have met violence with violence. Had he fallen in the encounter, and had his whole family perished from the earth, they would have erected a monument to his memory, their poets would have celebrated him in immortal songs. However, we are not teaching the morality of the Romans, the Greeks and the Germans, but Biblical, Israelitish ethics, which calls to us, "Hide thyself for but a little moment, until the indignation be passed away!" What would have become of Israel, if,

instead of proving itself buoyant like the ship, it had stood up proud and unbending like the mighty, heaven-aspiring cedar! Long ere this it would have been uprooted and dashed out of existence.

His submissiveness in the presence of superior strength has won for the Israelite the reproach of cowardice. If the Israelite be, indeed, an enemy to strife and to fighting with deadly weapons, it is as much from dread of inflicting death as from fear of being killed.

Our text reads, "Jacob was greatly afraid, and he felt distressed." Our sages interpret this verse as meaning: "He was greatly afraid for his own life and the lives of his beloved ones, and he felt distressed that he might be put under the necessity of inflicting death on others."

Submission, it is true, is a virtue to be practised only within narrow bounds. Humility and compliance may be low and mean qualities, unworthy of a human being. The narrow limits within which submission is praiseworthy are well defined in Jacob's story. First of all, Jacob humbled himself before his older brother, and the re-awaking of brotherly love was the reward of his deference. Secondly, Jacob was conscious of the wrong that he had done his brother.

Well may one bow seven times over, and even more, if thereby a wrong can be expiated, the memory of an act of injustice be blotted out!

It was not alone the humility of bowing low that conciliated the wrathful brother, but the soft word, the mild speech, the brotherly tone as well.

I know of no limits that ought to be drawn to the use of gentle words. Be ever mild in the form of your

speech, even though decided in your purpose. Always be friendly. Do not cultivate glibness of tongue, but be ever ready with a kind word. I well know, one cannot always be agreeable; one cannot answer amiably at all times, but this is true only because in this, as in all other respects, we are imperfect. He that strives after perfection in all things will in this direction, too, try to do his utmost.

There is no happiness on earth—indeed, our sages say there is no God—where there is no kindness, and as a result, not good cheer. What good does it do you, you husband, if you heap up treasures, and lay them at the feet of your spouse? What avails it that you are a paragon of virtue; that your spirit can soar far above our common life; that you are a marvel of deep learning, if, having all this, you lack friendliness of speech? Is your wife a happy woman? Are you happy? And of what avail, oh wife! is your beauty, your charm, your wit; what matters it that you are the very personification of fidelity and self-sacrifice; that your house welcomes the visitor by the cleanliness, the order and the good taste there manifest? You do not rest from morning till night. You are a pattern woman and mother, but if you are lacking in that one virtue—kindness—what matters all this to yourself and to others? If your speech is sharp and cutting; if you cannot bow down even seven times, if necessary; that is, if you cannot accommodate yourself to people as they are and to existing circumstances? And, you children, it matters not that you feed and clothe your aged parents with the best that can be procured; that you provide abundantly for their comfort, if you are unwilling to

bow before them in childlike reverence, if your lips know not the speech of kindness.

Gifts, combat and prayer bring forth prosperity, dominion and piety, but friendliness makes happiness. The key to one's own happiness and that of others is not of gold or iron. A cheerful spirit and a pleasant word will open the kingdom of bliss.

TOLERANCE.

"Then said Jacob unto his household, and to all that were with him,
Put away the strange gods that are among you, and cleanse yourselves, and change your garments.

"And let us arise, and go up to Bethel ; and I will make there an altar unto the God who answered me on the day of my distress, and was with me on the way which I went.

"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, and the ear-rings which were in their ears ; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Schechem."—GEN. XXXV : 2-5

What may be considered the distinguishing mark of a man of true culture? What characterizes the nation that has progressed farthest on the paths of civilization? The answer to these questions may, we think, be summed up in one word—tolerance !

If we allow the various nations of our time to pass in review before our mental vision, we shall find that those nations possess true culture whose social relations and legislative codes breathe a spirit of tolerance ; and the degree of tolerance characterizing a community may serve as a standard of its grade of culture. So, too, in the world's history. Page after page reveals the fact that, with the dawn of culture, the first traces of toleration may be discovered ; gradually tolerance spreads farther and farther, borne on its way by the progress of civilization, and, in turn, aiding the latter in its development.

History has also a story of retrogression in culture to

relate, and the first sign of each retrograde movement is the spread of intolerance.

Let us next turn our attention to individuals.

We must premise that by a person of culture, we, of course, do not mean one dressed in the height of fashion, whose house is furnished as fashion demands, and whose demeanor accords exactly with the rules in vogue in the society of the day. Neither does the term convey the idea of a man crammed with deep learning or polite literature. Whenever you find a man strict towards himself, true to his own convictions, but at the same time tolerant of others, then be assured that you are dealing with a person of culture, whether the individual belong to the upper or the lower stratum of society; whether he appear in a smock frock or wear threadbare clothing, it matters not, that person is cultured, even though ignorant of Latin and Greek.

Toleration and intolerance do not, as is commonly held, manifest themselves only in the field of religion, so that if religion did not exist, these conceptions would also be unknown; they assert themselves in social life generally, in whatever relations human beings may associate with one another. If you can quietly sit by, and listen while some one gives expression to an opinion, offensive to you, and according to your way of thinking, utterly false; or, if you can hear a question discussed from one point of view, while you would treat of an entirely different phase, and you do not obtrude a correction upon your opponent, then you are tolerant. If you can allow every one to pursue his own path, follow out his own views and inclinations—if you be a husband, permit your wife to carry out her own ideas in

the management of the household ; if you be a master, suffer your workman that does his duty faithfully to work according to his own method, and not lay down arbitrary rules for him to follow—then you are tolerant, and you bear the stamp of true culture.

Intolerance is especially decried in the form which it takes in religious life ; there its appearance is like that of a roaring lion, a loathsome, hissing serpent, a hyena from whose pollution not even graves are safe. But it is in the family circle, in the relations of every-day life that this beast is nourished and fostered, without the least suspicion that many of the evils attending our career may be traced to the same intolerance that has won for itself such ill fame in the domain of religion.

It is frequently said that heathendom knew not the curse of intolerance, that the scourge was brought upon mankind by Judaism in the first place, and that Christianity intensified its virulence and enlarged its dominion. This is false, first of all, because toleration and intolerance, as we observed before, are not confined to religion alone, but manifest themselves as phases of character throughout life. The observation is, moreover, intrinsically untrue. Pharaoh believed that the Israelites could serve their God in Egypt, and Moses replied to him, " Would not the Egyptians stone us, if we sacrificed a lamb ?" It seems, then, that as early as the days of Egyptian supremacy, men were stoned in honor of God. We may remember, in this connection, how Daniel, Hananiah and their companions were threatened with death ; Kambyzes, with his own hand, put to death the adored Apis of Egypt, and not content with that deed, he ordered a massacre among the Egyptians,

who had been unutterably shocked by the enormity of the outrage committed.

Our Chanukah festival annually reminds us of the religious persecutions of the Israelites under Antiochus. Both before and after the destruction of the Temple, the Jews underwent much suffering, because they would not consent to give divine adoration to the Roman Emperors. Socrates was sentenced to drain the cup of poison, because he was accused of contempt of the gods, of leading astray the youths under his control, *i. e.*, of teaching them to despise the gods.

It is true, nevertheless, that the instances of intolerance in heathen history are few in proportion to the large number of heathen on earth, and the length of time during which paganism held sway. This apparent tolerance may be traced to the fact that the various religious beliefs of the heathen did not clash with one another. Many gods were worshipped, but nothing definite was known concerning their number, and hence a few more or less made no vital difference. New gods were discovered, as we discover new planets. A stranger, finding other gods than those worshipped in his home, was in nowise troubled by this fact; he added the new gods to the old ones, or recognized in the former deities already familiar to him. A Roman coming to Greece found Jupiter in Zeus, in Germany he discovered him in Wodan, in Egypt in Osiris, and in Phœnicia in Baal, and in like manner, he found the counterparts of the other gods and goddesses known to him, with only the names changed. In Athens, a special altar was erected to the unknown gods, so that no insult might be offered to a god of whose existence the Athenians were unaware.

Such was not the case in Israel, and, therefore, our faith was looked upon as the source of intolerance. There is only *one* God, and he is better and more powerful than all your gods put together, and, at the same time, invisible! With this assertion, Israel cast down the gauntlet to the entire heathen world. No matter in what place the Israelite found the temple doors standing open for him, he could discover no god, worthy of his adoration; even the sun was nothing to him in comparison with his God. He allowed no god to be likened to his God, and would not yield an inch of his ground in matters concerning the Deity: "Your gods are nothing at all, our God alone is God! Your divine law is folly, ours alone is the law of wisdom. Your morality is an abomination, ours alone is pure and holy. Call our God neither Jupiter, nor Zeus, nor Wodan, nor Osiris, nor Ormuzd, nor Trinity, neither speak of him as Ideal, Nature, Reason. Our God is *God*, and neither definition nor comparison can encompass his greatness."

It is true, this sounds like intolerance; and this intolerance has, for thousands of years, incited all the nations of the earth to enmity towards us. This intolerance has made bloody work for the hangman and the torturers, the princes and the rabble of all times. But we cannot act otherwise. This intolerance, which refuses to have any comparison made between the belief of Israel and other beliefs, has never done any one an injury.* Israel, alone, has suffered thereby.

Turning to our text, we read that Jacob demanded of his followers, all the idols that they had with them, and "he buried them under the oak near Schechem."

* King John Hyrcanus' treatment of the Idumæans excepted.

For nearly twenty years before this event, Jacob had allowed the practice of idolatry in his family. Before her flight, Rachel had taken possession of her father's household gods. These images had therefore been worshipped by her as long as she had been at home. And Jacob had borne with this idolatry up to that time. He had probably thought, "Better a pious heathen from conviction than an unimpassioned believer in God, holding to the faith under coercion." This is an example of true tolerance.

Later, however, when he journeyed to Bethel to erect the long-promised altar to the service of the Most High, he would endure no discord, no mixture of idolatry and the worship of the one God. Here, again, we have intolerance, but intolerance proper to the circumstances, When standing upon ground holy to us, we dare not, only to please others, mingle the sacred and the profane.

In last week's portion of the Torah, we read how Laban swore to Jacob, "The *gods* of Abraham and the gods of Nachor shall judge between us." Here we have an instance of heathen intolerance which accepts all manner of gods. Jacob, however, would not lend himself to this form of tolerance. Jacob swore not by the gods of Nachor; he swore by the God of his father. That is intolerance, resting upon strong, personal conviction.

Be intolerant! Remain true to your belief in that which your conviction assures you to be divine, true, pure, holy and noble. Stand firm! Be not seduced by promises of earthly gain. Be not affrighted by any harm that may come to you; do not let ridicule move you from your position. If they call to you: "Come,

be not so stubborn. Give us a finger, if you must refuse your whole hand! Come to us! We shall be able to agree. Give way somewhat yourself, we too will do the utmost in our power to meet you. See, the difference between us is not great. We are willing to say, 'the gods of Abraham;' surely, you may then say, 'the gods of Nachor.' Be tolerant!"

No! Be intolerant! Between Judaism and philosophical Hellenism, as between Judaism and Christianity weakened to Unitarianism and Universalism, there yawns a deep chasm. We believe only in *one* God, a Divine Providence, ruling the world, in whose sight all men are equal. We cannot add anything to this belief, as, for instance, ascribing divine qualities to a human being, nor can we give up any part of it, as, for instance, endowing our God with human accidents.

In regard to the beliefs and the actions of others, however, be tolerant. Honor their temples and lecture halls, their priests and teachers, their congregations and audiences, even though in principle and practice they clash with your convictions. Throughout life, in narrower as in wider spheres, allow every one to reach his goal in his own way, without offering officious advice as to better methods of attaining his end.

Universal "enlightenment" is not the climax of happiness to which mankind may hope to attain in the course of time. Equalization of mankind, whether on a high or a low plane, is a dangerous principle. This principle guides a gigantic northern power which makes great exertions towards bringing about uniformity of belief. The accursed work of the Inquisition was inspired by this idea, and such is the motive of the advo-

cates of "enlightenment," who aim to lead the world on to enlightenment and—unbelief, and grow impatient when they find that they cannot accomplish their end. No; never will all mankind think alike! The Fiji Islander and the scholar in a Berlin lecture hall will never occupy the same point of view. The world is meant to present a varied, not a uniform aspect. Universal toleration is the hopeful dream of mankind—an ideal, not incapable of realization.

But do we not exclaim daily with the prophets, "On that day, the Lord will be One, and his name One?" We, who are here assembled in this house of worship, we all believe in one God. For us, God is even now "One and his name One," and yet how widely we differ in our conceptions of the divine and in our line of conduct. Acts, whose performance seems a sacred duty to one, are less than trivial in the eyes of another. Nevertheless, we live together in friendship and amity. The wide divergence of our paths in the "light of the Lord" does not disturb our peace. That such a relation may exist among all men is the hope that we cherish for the great day of our prayer; not one shepherd and one flock, but many flocks and many shepherds, and all the shepherds at peace with one another, serving one Master. We possess a sufficient assurance of progress, when we see believers of widely varying faiths, as well as those differing within the confines of a single belief, dwelling side by side in peace, enjoying like privileges; when pope, mufti, grand lama, rabbi and philosopher do not curse and defame one another, but rather dispose their followers to peace, so that all sects may dwell together in unity and concord.

Those were evil days, when the word tolerance was unknown in the domain of religion, when tolerance was not a virtue but rather a crime. So, the best time is to come, when the word toleration will again disappear.

The word *tolerance* is of Latin origin, and signifies "bearing." A man consents to *bear* an injustice meekly rather than become involved in strife and contention. The German speaks of *Duldung*, forbearance, patience. We speak of bearing with misconduct. Parents are patient with their children's misbehavior; teachers, with pupils of limited capacity. Such was, and is, the general conception of tolerance. The individual looks down upon those holding a different opinion with grim forbearance, or smiles pityingly at the childlike simplicity of the people; he bears with it, suffers it. For the present, let us rest content with this conception. It is the medicine that will cure the dreadful disease of intolerance.

Sound morality, however, knows not tolerance, not intolerance. It recognizes only the natural right of man to exercise freedom of thought, and especially to determine his relation to heaven, according to his own judgment and conviction. Man must even be allowed the right to fall into error. There is no need to practise forbearance or *sufferance*, because one man is orthodox in his faith, another is a reformer, and the views of a third differ from both of them; because this man is a Jew, that one a Christian, and the third a heathen. Each one has a right to be what he is. Not toleration, not forbearance, but one right for all!

One's conviction naturally becomes ever more fixed in nursing fanatic zeal towards other beliefs; while in

looking indulgently upon the beliefs of others, it is difficult not to become careless of one's own belief, not to allow respect for the convictions of others to make one falter in one's own faith.

We Israelites find it a difficult task to preserve a pious, Jewish faith, while practising universal toleration.

Let us ever remember Jacob, who bore with idolatry for twenty years, but removed the idols away from him upon erecting an altar to the one God, and founding an independent household. He allowed the heathen to swear by all the gods. He, however, swore by the God whom his father feared. Let us say with Joshua, in his farewell speech, "Choose for yourselves this day, whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

As we thank thee, O God, for the sun, which brightens the day, for its light and heat, so we thank thee for the sun of reason, which gives promise to mankind of a beautiful day—a day of peace and concord, when upon the sacred soil of thy adoration, neither blood nor tear will flow, no violence and no hate be manifested, neither cruelty nor bitterness be known.

Bless our country, the shining example of toleration to all the other nations of the earth! Bless the fathers and mothers, who encourage pure faith in thee in their family circles, and who implant it in the tender hearts of their offspring! Bless the teachers in the pulpits and in the schools, who teach thy law and urge the people to continued fidelity to it, and who, at the same time, proclaim peace—peace to him that is near and to him that is far, truth and peace! Oh, thou, God of truth and peace!

BELATED EDUCATION.

GEN. XXXVII.

For thousands of years men dwelt by the shores of mighty rivers, without knowing the fountain-head, whence the water issued in such volumes, ignorant of the mountain, whose springs fed the sources of the streams. Of the origin of many of these streams we are ignorant even to-day. Even more emphatically is this true of the springs of human actions, the influence at work in the lives of mighty nations. Great events pour their streams into the ocean of history. Individuals and millions are raised on high on these waves of the world's history, and again are sunk beneath its billows. But we know not the cause of these phenomena, reason fails to find their origin, which is frequently quite insignificant. Throughout thousands of years, Israel, like the gulf stream in the vast waters of the ocean, has preserved its individuality in the complex history of the world. When Israel poured forth from Egypt, it was a considerable stream. With the sojourn among the Egyptians and the exodus following thereupon, Israel's story ceases to be the record of a series of family events and develops into national history, and, thereafter, plays a part in the history of the world. Where must we seek the fountain-head of this nation? We do not mean the stock from which it sprang. For that we are

referred to Abraham. It is the elementary, moving force of this wonderful national story that we seek. We have read of it to-day, and have found it condensed into the words that form the heading of the chapter. "These are the generations of Jacob," this the issue of Jacob, namely, of Jacob's discipline of Joseph, a training, it must be admitted, long delayed. Jacob's eyes were not opened to the true condition of Joseph's spiritual life until the latter's seventeenth year, and then we read "his father rebuked him." But it was too late. Joseph grew up, we are told, with the sons of the maid-servants. His mother was dead. There remained, in his home, his father, his mother's sister, adult brothers, with their wives and two other wives of his father, but all these together could not, in his education and in their care of him, be a true mother to the boy. Had Rachel, his mother, been alive, it would probably not have been necessary for his father to rebuke his son in his seventeenth year. There would have been no enmity between Rachel's son and the sons of her sisters, and all the trouble springing out of this hatred, which finally ended in the removal into Egypt, might have been avoided. His father allowed the motherless child to grow up in its own way among the children of the maid-servants, and failed completely to observe the growing discord between Joseph and his brothers until too late for remedy. "Joseph brought evil reports of them unto his father." Jacob listened without rebuke to the *boy* Joseph's criticism and complaint of his brothers, who were *men* in years. Jacob's own early experiences ought to have impressed upon him the full significance of fraternal strife and the consequences of family dissen-

sions. In his intercourse with Esau and Laban, he ought to have learnt this lesson well. But he did not see that the same weed was springing up in rank luxuriance in his own house. When he finally noticed it, it was too late. The rebuke was in vain. "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children—and he made him a silken garment." (פסים is thus rendered in the Midrash.)

It is true, we cannot control the inclinations of our hearts; we have no power to decide whom we shall love, and how much affection we shall bestow. It was unfortunate that Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children, but he was not responsible for this feeling. Duty and common-sense, however, should have warned him not to slight his less-beloved children, nor to allow them to feel that he held them in less regard than he had for Joseph. He acted like many other fathers, heedless of the dictates of reason, guided by the heart alone. Jacob's love for Joseph did not lead him to watch over his child more carefully, and to discipline him for his own good; he left him to the tender mercies of Bilhah and Zilpah. On the other hand, he made his son a silken garment. Joseph's brothers, clothed like shepherds, tended their flocks, while his father's favorite went about in lordly clothing. It is scarcely a matter of astonishment that dim visions of authority over his brethren should have loomed up in Joseph's mind. We cannot accuse him of having harbored clearly defined thoughts on the subject. The idea of the rulership of one brother over another was not so very fanciful. Such had ever been the case in his family. Isaac was preferred to Ishmael, Jacob was set above Esau in receiving the paternal blessing. The bitter feelings

aroused by Joseph's narrative of his dream, which could so easily be interpreted as foretelling the future authority of Joseph over his brethren, were therefore not produced by over-sensitiveness. His brothers broke out into the cry, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" Even the father believed, though he kept the belief locked in his own heart, that the dream might be realized. "His father noted the matter." Finally, however, Jacob recognized the danger in such visions to the general peace of the family and to that of the dreamer, in particular. Thereupon, his father spoke to Joseph, not clothing his *words* in fine silk, for he rebuked him harshly. Here, again, we have a parallel to the course of so many fathers among us, who have not the heart to say a stern word to the *boy*, the mere *child*, but are ready, in their anger and excitement, to upbraid the *youth* in the harshest terms. But the rebuke came too late. Through the belated education of Joseph, the house of Jacob lost its firm balance, and thereupon rushed helpless upon its fate, through the pleasant days when the family had been saved from famine, into the ensuing darkness of slavery. Joseph's individual destiny, however, led him through the depths of slavery and imprisonment to rulership over Egypt.

A father neglected his motherless child, allowing it to follow its own inclination, instead of leading it with tender care; he attended to the education of his son only when the latter had become a youth. This it was that decided the destiny of a nation for centuries to come. "This is the issue of Jacob, Joseph being seventeen years old," etc.

When Jacob's last hour came, and he had gathered his sons about his death-bed, he spoke harshly to the three eldest of them. Our sages say: "Jacob addressed Reuben in these words, 'My son, thou mayest ask, Why I did not ere this address these words to thee? Because I feared that thou mightest turn the reproach back upon me.'" Our sages would not merit the title bestowed upon them, did they give us this narrative as of an actual occurrence. In this speech, they wish to teach us that fathers must not rebuke their children when they are grown, just though such reprimand may be. It comes too late, and can effect nothing but bitterness of feeling. It is easy to recognize the fault of beginning an education too late in life. Those that commit this error, finally, though it may be too late, come to the conclusion that their efforts were too long delayed. The fault of waiting too long to cease from discipline is less commonly recognized. The influence of the parental will upon the will of the child must make itself felt but lightly at first, and gradually increase in its influence. So, too, the removal of this discipline must be a gradual process, until at its completion, the son and daughter are left completely at liberty. Many parents embitter their own lives as well as the lives of their children by neglecting this principle; having once seized the reins of government, they know not when to lay them down. Everything on earth has its time of growth, of blossom, and finally of ripe fruitage. The same is true of education. A ship leaves the harbor. The steersman places himself beside the helm, surely not with the intention of steering the ship about upon the ocean aimlessly, but in order to guide it into another haven. The helmsman

then leaves his post; the cargo, if the ship carry any, is unloaded. If it bear no cargo, but comes to shore with empty hold, the rudder may be turned again and again; it is of no practical use.

Our weekly portion in the Torah furnishes us with an example of the uselessness of belated education, and shows us, at the same time, how apparently trivial incidents in family life may decide the fate of future generations. The consequences of events that occurred in Jacob's tent fills the richest, the most interesting pages of history for thousands of years after that time. Through the inverted lens of time, we see, like a drop on the edge of a cliff, this nomad family of the dim past in the midst of family dissensions, deplorably frequent at all times. As the drop helps to feed the spring which swells into the brook, into the stream, and finally into the mighty river, so family events become the source of an historical stream of mighty import.

It is a mistake for man to hold too high an opinion of himself, and think too meanly of others. This is the characteristic commonly called pride. On the other hand, it is unfortunate, if a man holds himself of too little consequence; that is, in his relation to mankind as a whole. It is unfortunate if a father thinks: "My attention to the education of my children or my neglect of them concerns only myself and my family. Of what consequence is my petty existence, are my actions within my own walls, to the world at large?" In this respect, one can scarcely hold too high an opinion of one's self. A man *dies* for himself alone; he *lives* for the world. His achievements and his omissions do not affect the present alone, nor do they pass away with it, but they

continue to influence the fate of others, first of his immediate descendants, and then, of more distant posterity. His good work in the education of his children is a benefit to the world, his neglect of discipline an injury.

Finally, the fact must not remain unnoticed that Joseph, in spite of all, after suffering keenly for his own petty faults and for the doting love of his father, grew up to be one of the most noble-minded of men. His early home had been the abode of piety and the fear of the Lord, and in spite of all the faults of his training, this could not but produce good results. The impressions of the parental home are not lost. For a time, they may appear forgotten; they may lose some of their freshness in our intercourse with men; amid youthful frivolities, their memory may grow dim; the conceit of youth may not hold them at their true value; but they will rise to the surface again, as oil floats ever upward, and finally gains the surface of the water. A child that has spent the first seventeen years of its life in a house permeated with an upright and god-fearing spirit may, indeed, if left to its own devices, go astray; may sink from one folly into another, but it will surely find the path of righteousness again. It will not be morally ruined. Whether discipline be early or late, the spirit of home will be the deciding influence. They are, indeed, favored whose youth has been passed in a god-fearing home; they will, at the end, live an honor to God.

Honor & home from no condition
act will your ft. Where all the world

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS.

"No human being, no hour in life, no moral action is without significance."

The world's history, and, as part of it, the fate of the individual, lie before us, dark and impenetrable as the mighty ocean. The sea rolls majestically before our eyes, terrifying us with its mighty waves and billows, its restless tossing and raging. And yet, what our eye can take in is merely a drop in comparison with the vast stretch of waters, and even this drop covers, as with a cloak, the secrets of the awful deep.

We raise our eyes to the firmament; our vision scans immeasurable distances. When the eye is tired out with gazing, not only the eye of the average man, but also the well-protected organ of the most skilful astronomer and the boldest thinker—it drops, and man must acknowledge to himself: "My vision can penetrate only the least part of that which is on high; I can comprehend only the smallest section of what I have seen, and that which my understanding can master—what does it signify in the plan of the Architect of the universe?" The vast design is entirely concealed from us. So with our insight into the mysteriously woven fate of mankind and of the individual.

The number of events chronicled by history, compared with the vast sum of past occurrences, is as the

limited horizon of man in comparison with the whole universe. Only an insignificant number of events is observed at all; the majority receives scarcely any notice, and is forgotten, and that which is observed, noted, and made a part of history is not understood in its relation to the whole. As in the world's history, so also in the life-history of every individual. If a man, at the age of seventy, were to take an inventory of his memory, noting all the clear recollections of his past life—how soon would his task be finished! How insignificant would be the sum thus obtained! Of an inconsiderable number of his experiences as compared with the sum total, has he taken cognizance; of this number, only the smallest portion has been impressed upon him; most of these impressions he has forgotten, and of that which finally remains fastened in his memory, he fails to understand the purpose, and what its relation to the whole. It is true, he can tell what he considered pleasant and what unpleasant events, what sad days and what joyful ones, but it may be that the unpleasant experiences were a source of blessing to him, while the pleasant ones were harmful in their consequences.

In the life of Joseph and his family, the Scriptures show how marvellously a man's life, contrary to his own actions and desires, he, indeed, unconscious thereof, may shape itself in a given way. The story further illustrates how the most trivial action, even of an insignificant man in an obscure corner of the earth, may continue to affect the destinies of others in the most distant future, unto the latest generations.

Who can say that he is not a Joseph in his own way? Or that each one of his actions does not play a part in

the lives of others ; that its influence is not felt in ever-widening circles ? In the life of Joseph, the Scriptures unveil for us the life of a single man. How many pass through life without solving the riddle of their own fate, and of their influence upon the lot of other men ?

No human existence is without significance, no hour in life is unimportant, no moral action is a matter of indifference. "There is nothing without its appropriate place, no man without his opportunity." Originally, Joseph was an unimportant personage for the world at large, a mere shepherd lad, running about with his brothers in the fields of Mesopotamia. Despite his humble beginnings, however, he, in the end, not only shaped the destinies of the house of Israel, but also impressed his personality upon the development of distant, mighty Egypt. Truly, the life of every individual is of significance in the plan of the universe. Do not estimate any man as of too little worth to be either useful or harmful to thee. It is true, not every stone the builders reject becomes the chief corner-stone, but for each one the Creator has provided a place in the great world-structure. The smallest may be a stumbling-block placed in thy path for weal or for woe. Do not force thyself upon the great ones of the earth, nor be too anxious about their favor or displeasure, as if they, alone, could bring blessing or curse upon thee. Had it not been for Pharaoh's dreams, the chief butler, powerful though he was, would have allowed Joseph, forgotten of all, to perish in prison. As far as our fate is governed by outward circumstances, it follows its own rules, to which both great and small must submit.

Neither underestimate thine own value, thinking,

"Nothing of all this concerns *me*. I am too insignificant; I can lend no aid in the world's work." In this sense, no creature on God's earth is insignificant, or exists for itself alone. To be of use in the world, one need be no philosopher, rich in wisdom, nor hold sacks of gold in his grasp, nor boast an arm of iron. Man, thou art an instrument in the hand of Providence! Look to it that when thy hour of usefulness comes, thy edge be not dulled and rusty.

Neither is any moral action a matter of indifference. Thy action, thy speech, thy omissions, and thy silence are either good or not good, and the actions that seem a matter of indifference—why, this very thinking that an action can be indifferent is one of the things that are *not* good. It is wrong to act thoughtlessly. To relate a dream, or to remark in a conversation that a certain person has done a certain thing, is considered a perfectly harmless proceeding. Thus Joseph must have thought about his own childish prattle. Jacob probably also considered it morally indifferent, whether his son was clad in silk or in linen. And yet how important were these things in deciding the fate of a large family and of an entire kingdom! No word falls upon barren soil; no action is lost in the sands of time. From it may spring a tree of life, or through you, and others like you, it may bring forth thorns and thistles.

Our text furthermore teaches us that we lack the insight to determine which of our experiences are truly good, and which are bad. We can discriminate only between pleasant and unpleasant experiences, for what is agreeable to us and what is good for us are not always united, nor is the disagreeable in every case evil. How

often a few days of joy, of pleasure, are followed by many days of sadness! Frequently, after gratification comes deep regret, serene happiness follows close upon bitter affliction, and after pain may come blessing. Joseph's brothers thought that, by selling him, they had rid themselves forever of the troublesome boy. This was *pleasant*, but not *good* for them. How frequently must they have felt bitter remorse for the unkind deed! Their hearts must have been pierced as with knives, when they saw their father sinking under the burden of his grief. Twenty-two years after the deed, we hear them, in their distress, breaking out into lamentations, "Truly, we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

So fared it with the brothers. To Joseph, on the other hand, the treatment that he received at his brothers' hands was anything but agreeable; but it was merely unpleasant, it was not evil. His way into the light lay through dark night. In order to rule, he had first to be a slave. The bottom of the pit was for him the first step of the throne. His suffering was the salvation of his family. Whatever is ordained by God, whatever is ordered as our lot, may be unpleasant, bitter, deeply painful, but it is never evil. Nothing *evil* can proceed from the hand of God. Let us, then, not be too extravagant in our delight in a pleasant experience, nor entirely cast down by grief when trouble comes upon us; we know not the end for which Providence has sent the joy or the trial. Neither be too indignant against him that has wounded thee by word

or deed, and has injured thy worldly prosperity. It may be that, though seeking to do thee harm, he has in reality benefited thee. Hold firmly to the belief: God directs everything for the best. No matter what man, in envy, in anger, in hatred, or in folly, plots against man, he can do no harm, if such be not God's will. Here and there a man is allowed to see the problem of his existence solved in his lifetime, and then he may exclaim with Joseph, "Ye thought evil against me, God meant it unto good." In most cases, however, we never receive any light on the subject, but grow old, remembering in bitterness the injuries that our fellow-men have done us. But it is our firm belief that there, where all errors vanish; where the spirit is entirely freed from earthly dross; where truth shines forth in brightness—there the ways of Providence will become clear; there shall we recognize that the happiness and the salvation of mankind are not promoted by the good, the wise and the upright alone, but that all men assist in the work—the good because such is their desire, and the foolish and the malicious, because they must.

“DEATH AND LIFE ARE IN THE POWER
OF THE TONGUE.”

(PROVERBS, XVIII : 21.)

GEN. XLI.

The turning-points in Joseph's life form an excellent illustration of the wise saying, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

Joseph's seventeenth year and his thirtieth may be looked upon as critical points in his career. In his seventeenth year, he was on his way to the misery of slavery and captivity, his thirtieth finds him scaling the summit of earthly honors. In each case, the weak tongue was instrumental in bringing about the crisis.

In ascribing most important results to the use of the tongue, Solomon does not refer to words that are carefully weighed and considered before they are spoken ; for in that case, the tongue is merely the irresponsible instrument of the mind. The text refers to the thoughtless use of the tongue, which is like the undirected play of a child. Like a child, it causes much trouble, and again wins all hearts by its artless simplicity.

In another one of his sayings, Solomon explains the meaning of this dictum. He speaks of a prattler, a babbler, who is like a careless marksman playing with arrows ; yet, while working havoc and destruction, he declares that he means no harm.

In the life of Joseph, we find an illustration of this

proverb. Joseph meditated no evil against his brothers. It was no fault of his that his dreams were so displeasing. It was his misfortune thoughtlessly to babble of them without taking counsel with his heart or his understanding. He manifested like thoughtlessness in repeating his brothers' improper talk. He reported nothing but the truth. Children speak the truth ; but they, too, tell it with the *tongue*, without discretion or consideration.

Turning to the change for the better in Joseph's fortunes, we again find his lot decided, not by the discretion but by the *thoughtlessness* of his speech.

One morning Joseph found the two high Egyptian officials, who shared his dungeon, much depressed in spirits. His good nature prompted him to ask the cause of their sadness. His *reason* did not urge him to put the question. Joseph was no physician, neither was he the friend of these men. It was his habit to exchange a friendly word with every one, and in this spirit, he put the sympathetic question, which really meant no more than our "How do you do?" Yet it was precisely this glib word of his tongue that became unto him the word of salvation. In vain did Joseph address the butler in well-chosen words, when the latter returned to fill his high position ; in vain his explanation of the injustice under which he was suffering ; in vain did he entreat his late fellow-prisoner to intercede with Pharaoh on his behalf. These words were inspired by his reason, yet they were of no avail, while the careless, forgotten "How do you do?" the trick of his tongue, saved his life. Two years after the words were spoken, the thoughtless courtesy of his lips sprouted into a tree of life for himself and his family.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it will eat its fruit."

Joseph tasted these fruits, the bitter and the sweet alike.

From his story, we may draw the general inference that the heart is not always so unfriendly, nor the judgment so severe as the careless tongue would proclaim.

The kind-hearted and pious Joseph would have been the last man intentionally to wound his brothers and his parents, but his unguarded tongue irritated his brothers, and enkindled their wrath, and so brought misery upon his family and himself.

Do we not all know men like Joseph, kind of heart, but cutting of speech? A bad habit, lazy good nature, and the dangerous gift of wit, all seeking expression in conversation, are responsible for this sharpness of speech. The consciousness that no ill-will is harbored induces a careless use of stinging words.

A clear perception of this trouble may be useful in teaching us two things. First of all, we ought not to weigh sharp words on too delicate and accurate a scale. We must not mistake the tongue for the entire man. A person may be a Joseph at heart and yet speak with the voice of Esau. Again, after having indulged in unguarded language, we may not comfort ourselves with the thought that our intentions are good. We scarcely comprehend our own hearts fully; how, then, can the world be expected to judge us according to our hearts? The opinion of the world is based upon our words.

From Joseph's life we may furthermore draw the lesson that any word of ours is liable to light upon inflammable material, which, catching fire, may work

havoc and destruction, though we had meant no harm. In the brain of man, much thought ferments without developing into definite conclusions or practical results. The masses wait only for a watchword to be given them, to which they then adhere unquestioningly.

In one hour Joseph's brothers, swayed by the suggestions of successive speakers, changed their minds three times. Their feelings were roused to enmity against their brother, but the decision necessary for action was wanting. "Let us kill him!" "Yes, he shall die!" "We will cast him into the pit!" "Away with him to the pit!" "We will sell him!" "Yes, let him be sold!"

Remember, therefore, your words spoken in the family, in the pulpit, in the halls of legislation, in society, without thought of harm, may be harmful in their *consequences*.

Not death alone, also life lies in the power of the tongue.

Many a slandered man wraps himself in the cloak of his innocence, too proud to clear himself, although before one word of explanation, evil opinion with all its evil consequences would vanish. Others, again, lack the courage to speak a good word at the right time, if that word opposes the current of general opinion. Reuben gives us an example of such cowardice. He would gladly have returned Joseph uninjured to his father, but he had not the courage to speak the word that would have saved him. Too late he revealed his true feeling in the matter—when he found the pit empty and Joseph sold. His tongue had not uttered the right word boldly at the right moment.

Have the courage to proclaim your opinion openly and

without disguise. Care not how high the waves of opposing opinion may run, if, by your courage, you may aid a good cause, prevent harm, or be helpful to innocence.

The Talmud makes Balaam, Job and Jethro take counsel together as to the fate of Israel. The one spoke in favor of its preservation, the other of its destruction. Job timidly held his peace. For this silence, it is said, he atoned by his well-known sufferings.

There are many such Jobs to-day, who, through timidity or through false modesty, are silent at times at which it would be proper for them to speak.

Finally, Joseph's story should teach us the worth of a tongue accustomed to friendly speech in intercourse with our fellow-men. Language is not meant to serve merely as a vehicle for conveying our ideas, but in our associations, it is to perform the office of oil between the parts of machinery that rub against each other. Language does not offer us only the threshed grains of wheat, but straw and chaff as well; not the fruit of thought alone, but also beautiful, variegated leaves and blossoms. Language is a fully developed plant, not merely its fruit.

Were nothing to be spoken but the words necessary for human intercourse, life on earth would be very quiet. The world would be a vast cloister of Trappists. Easy, pleasant conversation, maintained by the expenditure of but a very small percentage of thought, forms part of the amenities of existence.

The question put by Joseph to his fellow-prisoners belongs to this class of speeches, the offspring of the tongue, not of the brain. The greatest wisdom, the

most remarkable fluency of speech, could not have opened the prison doors for the innocent man. An empty, thoughtless phrase, a word of mere courtesy, led him from the dungeon to the throne.

Our sages, in recommending strongly the use of the most pleasing and the choicest expressions, refer to the passage in the Bible, which reads, "Of every clean beast . . . and of beasts that are not clean." In this verse, in order to avoid the unæsthetic word טמאה, unclean, four words are used in paraphrase of this term. Let us, too, eschew all harsh expressions in our daily conversation.

One of our greatest teachers exultingly mentions, as the ripest evidence of his worldly wisdom, the fact that no one had ever anticipated him in greeting, not even a heathen or a child—not the meanest of mortals with whom he had come in contact in life.

How many of us gathered together in this house have brought clouds into our lives by a thoughtless word or through disregard of a friendly form of greeting! Others, again, may be living comfortably in the sunshine of prosperity through the aid of friendship, which all unconscious they have won by means of a helping hand.

We are apt to think that "life and death" must depend upon great and difficult exertions, earnest labor and deep thought, while in reality, a word frequently forms the delicate hinge upon which our fortunes turn.

We must cultivate not only the feelings of the heart and the powers of the mind. Let us also accustom the tongue to speak words of kindness, of gentleness, of courtesy—for "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

HOME INFLUENCE.

"Joseph recognized his brothers, but they recognized not him."—GEN. XLII: 8.

Family life is like a light-house. The occupants see the ships leave the harbor, and follow them with their eyes, until the last sail is lost to sight below the horizon. In the darkness of night, the crew of many a vessel, far out on the waste of waters, peers eagerly into the darkness to catch a glimpse of the tower, one ray from whose lantern will inspire the men with renewed hope and strength. The watchers in the tower rest secure in their accustomed places, though wind and wave may beat about the house. They are safe and at rest. They know not of the fearful hearts of the sailors, whose eyes are strained anxiously towards the tower with its lamp of rescue.

So, when one member of a family takes leave of his home, there is sorrow on both sides; the one departing and those left at home are filled with sadness. But as days, weeks and years pass by, although the absent one be not forgotten, and though he be recalled to mind occasionally, yet he is no longer constantly in the thoughts of those still at home. Life at the homestead goes on in its usual way, even though there is one less in the family circle. As for the one that has left home, if the sun of fortune smiles upon him, and his ship of

life, laden with rich cargo, sails through calm seas, he, too, may, for a time, not think of the loved ones whom he has left behind, as the mariner does not look anxiously for the tower with its cheerful lamp, when the light of day is about him, and the weather is clear and bright. The son and daughter may, however, fall upon evil days while in a strange land; the dark night of despair may reign in their hearts; merciless fate may hem them in, leaving no way of escape. When such days come, the fearful heart seeks the paternal roof, the home of love and sympathy, of kindness and benignity, the home of happy, youthful days. Imagination overcomes the obstacles of land and sea, which may separate the child from home, and fancy conjures up a picture of the days spent under parental care. Home is the light-house which the child seeks with deep longing, when surrounded by the darkness of night, when driven by the fury of the storm. At home, on the other hand, the days pass quietly and monotonously in blissful ignorance of the misery of the absent ones, whose hearts, weighed down by trouble and distress, beat yearningly at the thought of home.

How fervently, from the very depths of his soul, Joseph must have called upon his father on that dreadful day in the pit! The dear, sheltered home, now lost to him forever, must have seemed a veritable heaven. On his way to Egypt, in his career as a slave, later when wasting the best years of his life in prison, though innocent of any crime, how frequently, in blessed dreams, in thought, in desire, in reverie and imagination, he must have been transported to the home of his youth! Its memory ever remained fresh within him. Later, when

his fortunes changed for the better, when his first son was born to him, he named the child Menasseh, which means to forget, "For," said he, "God hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." This very incident shows, however, that he had not forgotten his "father's house," for on that happiest of days, when giving his son a name, he showed by the name that he remembered the home of his youth. It was, therefore, natural that Joseph should recognize his brothers. In spirit he had been at home so frequently that his family had not become strange to him. They, however, recognized him not. The explanation usually given for this circumstance is that Joseph was almost a child when he left home, and when his brothers saw him again, he had become a man. But Benjamin was even younger than Joseph; Gad and Asher were but little older; even Reuben, the oldest of all, was only thirteen years older than Joseph, and nevertheless Joseph recognized them all. The high position in which his brothers found him may, it is true, have made recognition more difficult; but even this circumstance could not have obscured the memory of features once well known to them. As observed before, the one leaving home is easily forgotten, his memory fades away quickly, while the recollection of the loved ones at home is never effaced from the mind of the absent one. Joseph's memory must, furthermore, have been a bitter reproach to his brothers, so that, far from cherishing remembrance of him, they rather sought to keep him away from their thoughts.

Oh, well beloved home! Happy family life! Thou paradise of our childhood and youth! Who that has tasted of thy joys can e'er forget thee! He, whom fate

has too soon driven from the paradise of youth, or who has early been deprived of its guardians, he knows not of how much of the happiness of life he has been robbed, as little as the Esquimau can understand how greatly his dull, gray sky would suffer by comparison with the heaven that smiles upon the land of the citron. Even though years have passed since we left the home of our youth, though it exist no longer, and we ourselves preside over homes as fathers and mothers, with children confided to our care—its memory is always dear to us, the recollection of the happy youth spent within its walls is ever a delight to the soul.

When Joseph was tempted by sin, he said, "How then can I do this great evil, and sin against God?" This was the influence of his recollections of home, a warning voice from the home penetrated by the fear of the Lord. Our sages say that the revered face of his father was thrust between Joseph and sin, and that thus he was kept from doing evil. What better guardian can a young man take with him into a strange land than the memory of the sanctuary of home, the memory of his father and mother? When a child in a distant land has taken the first step toward committing a sin, and his own self-respect no longer holds him in check, then there comes over him the remembrance of his parents. "What would they say, were they to know of my evil ways? How ashamed of me they would be! How they would grieve over my fall!"

Father and mother must, therefore, make the family life one of peace and harmony. Nothing does more to mar the happiness of children, nothing makes the remembrance of home more painful, than discord between

father and mother. Make your house a pleasant abode for your children according to the means at your disposal. Not plenty and show, but kindness and love everywhere perceptible make home a happy place; their presence is felt in the very air of the house, in the pleasant relations existing among the various members of the household.

If the recollection of home is to be an active, blessed memory, the father must not only have a house, the house must also have a father and a mother, who are a part of it, not ever on the streets, in company, attending to business, seeking pleasure and distraction of all kinds. "Home" means father and mother living in the midst of their children. The memory of a youth spent amid such associations does not die out in the hearts of the children, and, as with Joseph, an absence of twenty-two years cannot efface the recollection of home. Where there are such memories, brother will not say to brother, "I do not know you!" "Joseph recognized his brothers." Their likenesses, their remembrance had never departed from him. In spite of all the unkindness that had come between them, he felt himself at one with them.

A child's pleasantest recollections of home—pleasant and yet earnest enough to be deeply graven upon its mind—are, after all, those of the piety of the family life, especially of the solemn and joyous festivities, attendant upon Sabbaths and Holy Days. Even though the parents feel but coldly towards these celebrations, they have no right to deny the enjoyment thereof to their children. To compass this end, children may be denied some pleasures during the week, so that indulgence in

them on the Holy Day may make the season additionally pleasant by aid of sensuous delights.

It is useless to speak to the men of these things. They go on in their own way, heedless of words of advice. The mothers, however, should consider it a sacred duty to impress upon their children the true delight of the day of rest properly celebrated, and of joyful festivals, and weave the memory of such days into the child's recollections of home. A son whose home was never more to him than an eating house, whose father was simply his provider, whose mother, the lady of the house, will not be the one to exclaim in the hour of temptation, "How then can I do this great evil, and sin against God!" God forms no part of his childish recollections, and the moral fear of such a father and such a mother is not a sufficiently active memory to deter him from sin.

As your children are dear to you, oh, parents! make your home-life pleasant and attractive. Mingle innocent, sensuous delights with religious earnestness, so that the remembrance of home may be a blessed memory to your children throughout life!

EXISTENCE AND LIFE.

"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years : few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."
—GEN. XLVII : 9.

Even in the time of Jacob, one hundred and thirty years were no short span of life ; besides, Jacob was still alive, and might hope to attain as great an age as his forefathers, and perchance live longer than they. It is also difficult to see the force of Jacob's remark as a reply to Pharaoh's question.

Were a question like that of Pharaoh to Jacob to be put to one of us, we should find it easy to answer, easier than Jacob, because we should not have to glance over a series of one hundred and thirty birthday-anniversaries, in order to make a reply. Such, however, is the case only when the question is merely about the length of existence. If we are asked about the length of time during which we have enjoyed life ; if we subtract from the days of the years of our pilgrimage, the time that we have spent in idle dreaming ; that we have frivolously wasted ; the time passed by us in trouble and distress, in dread and anxiety ; those long periods, the wishes and hopes and labor of which ended in bitter disappointment ; if we deduct all these items from the sum of the days of our lives, we should have to cast up the aggregate of

the periods of our lives remaining, before giving the actual number of years that we have lived.

In this spirit, Jacob replied to Pharaoh: "You ask about the length of my existence? The years of my pilgrimage in various lands are one hundred and thirty; but how long have I really *lived*? To that question, I cannot give you an answer. The sum of my *life*, in the best sense of that word, is very small. In these one hundred and thirty years, I have *lived* but little. My father and my grandfather saw better days. They lived more than I in the years of their sojourn upon earth."

Even the bright spots in his existence, the short period in which he really *lived*, Jacob calls evil.

Men upon a low plane of culture, lacking, as they frequently are, in self-knowledge, lament bitterly, when days of distress come upon them. They possess a soothing balm, however, for their suffering—they throw off all responsibility, and rail against man and Providence as the cause of their trouble. When good times return, they enjoy them, and that without allowing self-accusation to mar their pleasure.

Upon a higher level of culture and—what is synonymous with it—of self-analysis and self-comprehension, men bear sorrow quietly and with resignation. They neither reproach Providence, nor attribute their misfortune to the malice of wicked men. They recognize that the root of most of the evils that plague us lies in ourselves. The consciousness of our own culpability hangs like a gray mist even over the bright spots of life.

A glance at the career of Jacob may show us the justification for his complaint about the short duration of his life, as well as for his acute consciousness of his own culpability.

Esau and Jacob were born at the same time. In temperament they were the very opposites of each other. "The children struggled together within" Rebekah. You who have brothers and sisters, kind, loving and self-sacrificing; you who dwell together in brotherly and sisterly love, throw no stone of condemnation upon Jacob, because of the unfraternal relations between him and his brother, because the deceit plotted by the one aroused murderous thoughts in the soul of the other. Remember, your brother is not an Esau! In counting up the days of his life, Jacob had to strike out the days spent in the home of his youth. Home becomes a veritable hell, when it is the theatre of deadly enmity between brothers.

Another cloud obscured the brightness of Jacob's early days. His parents were not in harmony in regard to the education of their children. In painting scenes and characters, the Bible does not lay on the colors heavily. In a few light and seemingly accidental strokes, a picture is placed before us. In this narrative, we read simply, "Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob." This is the theme. It needs no genius, no rich fancy to compose the variations upon it, and every variation of the numberless ones possible will be sad. Every child whose youthful recollections are of parental strife and discord, may, like Jacob, strike out the years of his childhood from his book of life.

Jacob was *placed* in these unfortunate circumstances, he was in nowise responsible for them. The good man, however, always sees cause for self-reproach in the trials and tribulations of life.

No one can be asked to enter into a bond of friend-

ship with a man like Esau, but it is a brother's duty to manifest a brotherly spirit even towards an Esau. No matter how difficult it may be to continue in fraternal relations with your brother, *you* dare not give him up. It is not for *you* to break loose from him. Others may criticise your brother harshly, and treat him as he deserves to be treated; your judgment is not free, your course toward him is marked out to you by the tie of blood between you.

Jacob's life after he left the paternal roof was a mere existence—an existence full of thorns. His work was heavy and momentous. After the toil of the day was over, he did not find rest and inspiration in the circle of his loved ones. No; dislike, mistrust and envy met him on the threshold of home; he encountered everywhere glances of reproach and contempt. This existence finally ended in secret flight.

A life passed among kinsfolk is an enviable lot. As every tree in the forest is sheltered from the elements by those about it, while the solitary tree in the open field is broken by the storm, so we are protected by loving relatives, ever ready with help and sympathy. But how sad the sight of kinsmen at enmity with one another! The wrath of the offended kinsman is more passionate than that of another, his stroke is surer, more fiercely burns the wound inflicted by him.

Whoever has, like Jacob, lived at variance with his relatives, or in his business relations, has daily had to bear with ill-will from those associated with him, may strike out those years of his existence, as a time during which he has not lived.

Again, it was not Jacob's fault that he had so shrewd

and slippery a man as Laban to deal with in his family and business relations. Nevertheless, he could not but reproach himself for finding no better way out of his difficulty than to meet cunning with cunning, and to employ deceit and flight in severing his connection with the brother of his mother and the father of his wives.

Accompanying Jacob upon his homeward journey, we see his constant fear of the meeting with his brother; the misfortune of his only daughter; the critical position in which he was placed by the uncontrollable passion of his sons, Simeon and Levi; the early death of his beloved Rachel; the discord among his children, which he saw breaking out again in his house like an hereditary evil, and finally the twenty-two years of grief for the supposed, horrible death of his favorite. We should far exceed the proper limit of time for our discourse, were we to discuss all these points so minutely as to show how they illustrate the text.

The general meaning of the text is, however, clear to us. It teaches us the difference between *existence*, "the days of the years of my pilgrimage," and *life*, "the days of the years of my life."

Our text contains Jacob's self-accusation. Man is permitted to judge himself according to a severe standard. Jacob scorned to acquit himself of wrong-doing by urging the untoward circumstances under which fate had placed him.

The Bible records the age of the departed Patriarch in these words, "the days of Jacob, *the years of his life*, were one hundred and forty-seven years."

In the sight of the all-wise Father, Jacob had *lived* throughout his whole existence. What seemed as lost

to him, the bitter trials and the oppressions of his heart, were the birth-throes of his soul, his training for a higher destiny.

In the economy of nature, there is change of form, but never absolute loss; so, too, in the domain of the moral actions of mankind. That which is our greatest trial, if considered by itself, may, in the complete plan, prove a beneficent dispensation, though we frequently lack the insight to see it in its proper light.

Whenever, oh man! you succumb in honest contest with fate, remember that your failure is that of a mortal, whose weaknesses and imperfections are well known to him, who has made you as you are; in whose spirit the Holy Scriptures testify concerning Jacob, "*He lived full one hundred and forty-seven years.*"

IMMORTALITY.

GEN. XLIX.

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Shakspeare's profound observation that there are "things in heaven and earth," of which man has no knowledge, does not refer to those natural forces which reason has as yet failed to comprehend, though undoubtedly true also of them, but to a spiritual world, whose nature can be grasped neither by physical perception nor by the finest powers of the human intellect, a world whose borderland we may tread but in dreams and vague presentiment.

In our discussion of this proposition in regard to "things in heaven and earth," we shall try not to soar into high and unaccustomed spheres, but shall remain as near earth as possible, dealing with those problems that obstruct the path of every thinking being.

Let our text be the assertion of our sages: "The patriarch Jacob did not die."

Jacob went down into Egypt with seventy followers. During his seventeen years' sojourn in that land, this number must have increased considerably. Nevertheless they continued to form one family. The dying patriarch was as ever its head, holding all its members together. To his three oldest sons, themselves advanced in years, he

addresses stern words of reproach. He takes from the oldest son the highly-prized birthright, and no one ventures to remonstrate, much less to gainsay his decision.

Families are not held together by the force of reason. If such were the power of reason, if intelligence could bind together the various members of a family, our hold on family life would be as strong to-day as it was in Jacob's time. We have lost nothing of intellectual power since his time; neither has the faculty of reasoning been taken from us. Nevertheless, it would be impossible for twelve large households, with children and grandchildren, to hold together as one family. It is difficult nowadays for the adults of a single household to look upon themselves as one body. The more extended the power of the intellect, the more limited the range of that subtle "in heaven and earth" which we do not understand. Among these things must be reckoned the recognition of the ties of kindred even in the limited degree in which it exists to-day.

No one can have failed to observe that the most intelligent are not the most obedient nor the most affectionate as children; not the most faithful in conjugal relations; not the most self-sacrificing as fathers and mothers—in short, not the ones most cognizant of the claims of kinship. Goethe's correspondence with his mother was carried on through a valet. Moses expected the sons of Levi, whom he had placed in the exalted position of teachers and guides of the people, to have sufficient strength of soul to disregard their feelings for parents, for children and kinsmen, if necessity demanded the sacrifice. If we wish to see true beauty of family life, tenderness in parents, obedience in children, warmth of

affection for kindred, we must not ascend too high in the strata of intelligence.

The old world can boast of an entire class of men of supreme culture, with whom, in the United States, only individuals, not a class, may bear comparison. Nevertheless, as a whole, the people of this country may be considered the most intelligent among the nations of the earth, or rather, we may say, this country has the smallest number of uneducated and narrow-minded citizens in proportion to its population. But, on the other hand, it must be said, a chilling indifference, penetrating the very heart of the people, characterizes its family life. The American can not be denied credit for unexampled nobility and public spirit in generous gifts to charitable and educational institutions, but the lack of warmth in family relations may perhaps be one of the causes of this extraordinary liberality. The fortunes of his heirs after his death trouble an American but little.

It is not agreeable to contemplate the consequence of the stronger family feeling existing among the Jews—less readiness in making great sacrifices for the common good; Judah Touro has as yet had no successor.

Intellect is, therefore, an obstructing rather than a fostering element in the recognition of the claims of kindred. Union may exist among the members of a family, even though there be no sympathy among them, no harmony in inclinations of mind and heart. There must, therefore, be some common *soul* element in the family, handed down from dead and gone ancestors, sometimes tracing its origin far into the past, which makes the descendants of a common stock feel a bond of kinship uniting them.

Such is the subtle bond thrown about us Israelites. In spite of our patriotism for the land in which we dwell ; in spite of our intimate associations with the professors of other faiths ; in spite of the differences among us, in culture, in religious opinions and practices, we Israelites, scattered over the whole earth, as we are, possess a common "something" inexplicable by reason, a prevailing family feature, something that reason neither grasps nor courts. "Jacob is not dead." Jacob's soul continues with his family in immortal life. The soul of Jacob is not exceptional. The souls of all of us continue to live in our descendants. Our fathers and mothers live on in us, and our spiritual characteristics are transmitted to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This truth is a ray of immortality itself.

The proof of the existence of a life far removed from the earthly life of reason ; of a life unfathomed by the understanding, lies in the very stronghold of the intellect, namely, in science. Can mere *reason* explain how it is that man gives up his whole life to the cause of science? Does *common-sense* ever make such a demand upon man?

How many men of noble character and high attainments, while seeking to extend the domain of knowledge, have met their death in the icy regions of the Pole, in the swamps and sands of Africa! But no matter how many may thus perish, the number remains great of those that, undeterred by the fate of the pioneers, follow in their footsteps. How many Cræsus of learning have languished in attics, and have, finally, perished in the act of enriching science with the result of their labors! Such phenomena may be included

among the "things in heaven and earth," beyond the comprehension of reason.

In our own days, have we not had a sad instance of such devotion to science in the fate of the two men* that sought to do that in attempting which hundreds before them had perished—to tame the strong winds of the air for the use of man? Would cold reason urge man to risk his life in such a cause, were there not, at the same time, a vague presentiment in him of the "things in heaven and earth," of which the intellect can tell us nothing; did not an inward voice whisper to him, "If the worst happen, your body may perish in the venture, but no harm can come to your soul?"

What would science be or what would become of it, if left to the control of reason, which it worships as its god; were it not for belief in immortality, which it refuses to accept?

In spite of the initial expense of a musical instrument and the cost of instruction in its use, it is not uncommon to find one in our homes, while in scarcely one of a hundred dwellings is there an apparatus for physical experiment; in one of ten thousand, perchance, a laboratory. Hundreds of private tutors in music, in arithmetic, in penmanship and orthography are employed, against one engaged to teach history and natural science.

The education of children is frequently directed solely with a view to their worldly success. The study of history and natural science does not contribute to this end. The poor instruction in these branches offered in the

* Donaldson, who, with a companion, made an ascent in a balloon, and never returned.

public schools—if, indeed, they be included in the curriculum—is deemed sufficient.

There are, however, some human beings to whom these subjects are of the greatest interest, by whom days and nights are given to the advancement of learning that can bring them no practical gain in a world of reason. Such devotion proves to us that the soul soars in another world even during its life on earth—a world, in which there is no death, though everything above us, in the world of reason and the senses, be hushed, and our friends lament and bury us as dead.

When Jacob called Joseph to his side, and gave him instruction as to the manner of his burial, suddenly the thread of his discourse was broken off, and as though in delirium, he began to speak of Rachel, who had died many years before. In distant Egypt, with the shadow of death already upon him, his spirit hovered over the lonely grave on the road to Bethlehem.

What explanation can be offered for this contact of the soul of the living with the dead, unless we admit the existence of that “something,” soaring far above our atmosphere of cold reason, on the heights of fancy and presentiment?

What was the earnest wish that Jacob expressed upon his death-bed? He entreated Joseph to convey his body to the home of his youth, and there bury it beside his forefathers. The task imposed was no light one. Its execution demanded the assistance of quite a little army, for the way was long and difficult. In our days, the bodies of those wrecked off the far English coast were taken up from the bottom of the sea to be laid away to rest in the earth of home, in the western part of this country.

Is this the prompting of reason? Common-sense says: "Let grass grow over the graves. Let oblivion spring up in the hearts of those left on earth. As for the remains still visible to us, let them be removed from sight as soon as possible." Science offers its aid, and builds an oven for the speedy destruction of the body. And it would seem as though the spot in which dust is returned to dust ought to be a matter of indifference.

Is reason not right in its opinion? The world, however, from Jacob's time to the destruction of the *Schiller* in our own day, has refused to become reasonable on this point. It cannot be gainsaid, there is an immortal something "in heaven and earth," which was before our time, exists during our lives, and will continue to be after we have passed away. The deaf man has no conception of sounds, the blind man knows nothing of colors, so it may be that we live in the midst of glories for whose perception we have not the proper senses, and to understand which we lack intellectual strength so long as our *physical* existence continues, so long as the soul, hidden within the body, is limited to the perception of the things of this world.

What we call the future life is not a kingdom of heaven, a preternatural world entirely separate from this one. It forms one world with our own. As long as the soul wears its earthly garb, we can perceive only so much of it as our senses reveal to us, and intellect and reason teach us, and as a "something" tells us—something beyond the reach of intellect or reason. Like a disembodied spirit from another world, it flits across our consciousness; like lightning's flash, it illumines our souls; like a ghostly echo, like faint sounds

dying away in the distance, it rouses vague thoughts within us.

A man may presume to doubt the existence of God; he may scoff at those that believe in the immortality of the soul and find comfort in this belief. He cannot argue out of existence that spiritual "something," spoken of by Shakspeare, soaring above the senses and beyond reason. Let him call it an incomprehensible something. To us, it is God and immortality.

THE DEATH OF THE FATHER.

"And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, Peradventure Joseph may now hate us; and then he would certainly requite us all the evil which we have done unto him."—GEN. L : 15.

As a flickering light flares up in sudden strength, illuminating the surroundings with ghastly effect, and then dies out forever, leaving dense darkness behind, so family affection, the consciousness of a close union between brothers and sisters, once more leaps into life in their hearts, when they stand about the newly-made grave of their father. In their common grief, they feel, in the very depths of their hearts, that they once more are united. But when they return to the house of mourning, which the father has left forever, the protecting roof seems to have been removed from the home, so long the abiding-place of peace and happiness, the walls appear to totter on their foundations. The importance of the individual, the "*I*," develops with amazing rapidity, while the idea of unity, the "*we*," fades into the background.

One of the consequences of the death of parents, and surely not the least melancholy of them, is the loosening of the family tie, the relaxation of the bond of union between brothers and sisters.

Not until Jacob's body, after elaborate funeral ceremonies in Egypt and Canaan, had been laid away to rest; not until many months had passed and the sons were once more gathered together in their own home,

did Jacob's children actually *see* that their father was dead. From the death of their father until their homecoming, they had *felt* their common loss in their common grief. Now, close upon the exhaustion of the emotions followed the actual perception of what had occurred. They saw that everything had changed. The brothers confronted each other with mistrust and estrangement. Each one presupposed that the change, which he perceived in his own mental attitude—the substitution of the individual for the body, of “*I*,” for “*we*”—had taken place in each of the others.

An infirm, blind old man had died and been buried. As a matter of fact, the event caused rather a feeling of relief than of loss to those left behind, and to the deceased himself, death brought welcome release. But the influence of his mere existence among them, even though he was stretched helpless on the couch of pain, as now of his death, was marked and powerful. The home had received a severe shock. Its regular life was destroyed. Everything had to be measured by the new standard, and adjusted to the new order.

The impression that their position in life was insecure prompted the anxious thought of the brothers, “What is our relation to Joseph?” For their father was dead, and they had to be assured anew of their relation to Joseph, before they could trust him. Joseph, after his father's death, might prove a very different person from the Joseph of Jacob's lifetime. But there are noble souls in the world, which stand all tests successfully, and pass through every crisis without losing in magnanimity. They cannot understand how it can be otherwise. Such a soul was Joseph's. He could not conceive of himself

as changing towards his brothers, and he wept when they came to him with mistrust in their hearts and on their lips.

It is, indeed, touching to look upon a group of eleven grown men, helpless and fearful as a flock of sheep after a thunder clap, throwing themselves at the feet of their much-dreaded brother, with the entreaty, "Allow us to live protected by the dying wish of our father!" But the picture of Joseph appeals to us even more strongly. We see him overpowered by this speech, weeping and comforting them, acquitting them of all wrong, nobly covering up their evil deed with its good consequences, and finally promising to care for them and theirs as he had done before his father's death. So beautiful are his words and so noble his behavior, that children, upon returning from their father's grave, instead of sitting upon the ground and reading Job, might well peruse this chapter of the Bible daily, and take to heart this example of the magnanimity of a brother after the death of his father.

The *brothers* of Joseph, not Joseph himself, saw that their father was dead. No change had been wrought in Joseph's filial and fraternal feelings by the death of his father. He, therefore, suspected no change in any one else. Not so his brothers. They had given but poor proof of brotherly love. Joseph might have told of an instance, not exactly noble in its nature, of their brotherly devotion. Later, too, when Benjamin's safety was at stake, they had shown but little brotherly love and solicitude. They had been distressed, and had cried aloud at the thought of their father's grief, were they to return without his favorite. These selfish men felt that

the death of their father released them from irksome authority, and they supposed that Joseph shared this feeling with them.

One's own frame of mind is the mirror in which the world is reflected. The man of guilt suspects every fellow-creature of wrong-doing. The innocent sees nothing but innocence about him. The blemishes that we see in others are frequently only the reflections of our own imperfections.

His brothers interpreted Joseph's speech and actions, his silence, his omissions, in the light of their own distrustfulness.

How often is this phenomenon repeated in life! We attribute importance to the gestures of others, read significance into their words, and draw inferences from their actions, and no ulterior meaning was intended. All this is merely the reflection of our own souls. It were well to examine carefully, whether like Joseph's brothers, we have not read amiss, before we put an unfavorable construction upon the thoughts of our fellow-men. There are many such sharp-sighted men and women in the world, who know more about us than we know ourselves. They know what we would think, if we thought; what we would say, if we spoke; they know the purpose of our actions as well as of our failure to act. They know our reasons for looking to the right and not to the left, for looking to the left and not to the right. They pride themselves not a little upon their insight, and look upon themselves as demi-prophets. What a pity, all these cogitations are entirely without rhyme or reason!

"One must know much in order to know how little

one knows." This is a well-known truth, but we limit ourselves too much in its application. Usually, the aphorism is understood as referring to book-learning. We recognize that a person must be very learned in order to know what an infinitesimal part of knowledge is his own possession. But the phrase is applicable to all men, not to the learned alone. Every one, no matter what his station in life, must possess rich experience and a goodly share of the knowledge of human nature in order to understand how frequently, in spite of all wit and cleverness, he may be on the false scent.

Parents themselves may be in error in regard to their children and their children's futures. How harshly Jacob spoke of Simeon and Levi, and how mistaken he was about Levi. In the blessing of Moses, the tribe of Levi was lauded in the highest terms, and throughout many hundreds of years, the position of its members was the most sacred and the most influential in Israel. Ephraim, who was preferred to his brother, and blessed with Jacob's right hand, turned out to be a destructive element in Israel.

Two persons may dwell side by side in the marriage relation, growing old and gray, without ever sounding each other's hearts to their very depths. Most of our knowledge of the soul-life of our fellow-man, upon which we so pride ourselves, is like the acquaintance of Joseph's brothers with his thoughts and emotions. They *imagined* that they understood their brother, and they thought that they would make use of this knowledge by very delicate and clever means. "They sent word unto Joseph." They invented a speech, and had it reported as spoken by their father upon his death-bed. They

then came to Joseph, threw themselves down before him contritely, and offered themselves to him as servants. Then Joseph confronted them in his innocence, and it became clear to them that they had been on the false scent. This is an every-day occurrence, which, perhaps, does not always strike us so forcibly as in the Scriptural narrative about the children of Jacob.

Finally, the narrative teaches the effects of an evil conscience. Joseph could forgive his brothers, and they could thus escape punishment for their evil deed. Conscience, however, is not a merciful, noble-hearted brother, but an inexorable judge. An evil conscience gnaws ceaselessly at man's heart-strings; an evil conscience is his companion at bed and board.

Forty years had passed since their brother had been sold. Joseph's kindness and tenderness, his forgiveness of their deed, had not been able to lay this perturbed spirit of conscience, and these forty years had been powerless to still the upbraiding voice, penetrating to the very marrow of their bones.

O that after the father's eyes are closed upon this world, it could never be noticed in the relations of the family circle that the head of the house, he who during his life kept all together, is dead! May helpless orphans, upon returning from the burial of their father, never want for a brother like Joseph, who will take upon himself the leadership of the family, and keep its members united, so that it may not be *seen* that the father has passed away!

GRATITUDE.

EX. VIII.

In regard to the first three plagues recorded in the Holy Scriptures, we are told distinctly that they were to be brought upon the land by Aaron. In allusion to this, our sages observe: "In the water of the river, Moses found shelter when a child, and the earth covered the Egyptian whom he had killed. It would have seemed ungrateful if, unmindful of their good offices, he had smitten the earth and the water with his staff." Such reflections of our sages must not be taken literally as explanations. In their intense admiration for the Holy Scriptures, they like to read all good and noble thoughts into them, or to give these thoughts to us as drawn from this favorite source. In the case under discussion, they want to impress upon us the excellence of gratitude, and they maintain that in the Holy Scriptures, they find it advocated by God, and practised by Moses to its utmost consequences. A man must not injure even the earth or the water that has been of service to him. The thought has, indeed, passed into a proverb, "*In einen Brunnen, aus dem man getrunken, soll man keinen Stein werfen.*" (Into a well, from which one has drawn water, one should not throw stones.)

Gratitude is a virtue that apparently reaps no reward, while its opposite, ingratitude, seems much more profitable. One may be ungrateful, and yet remain well,

prosper, grow rich, and attain a good old age. A man may fail to return thanks for all that he is and possesses; no earthly judge can arraign him on this charge.

Gratitude, indeed, may cost man dear, may lead him through fire and water, and demand sacrifice after sacrifice on his part. No wonder, then, that we see this virtue so frequently neglected.

The ungrateful man, like a dishonest debtor, repudiates his debt. The benefit is forgotten, or its value minimized in the eyes of the debtor, and held unworthy of any special thanks, or he looks upon it as an attention due him. If the beneficiary does remember the favor, and acknowledges it as such, he seeks to attribute it to selfish motives on the part of the benefactor. Finally, as the benefit is underestimated, the return that he makes for it is overestimated; he holds that he has fully made good his indebtedness.

What is the nature of gratitude? How must it first manifest itself? When may it cease to be active? A generous acknowledgment of favors received constitutes the first element of gratitude. The Hebrew language has no equivalent for our word "thank." Where we use *thanks*, the Hebrew speaks of תורה, acknowledgment, *recognition*. מורים אנחנו לך means not "we thank thee," but "we acknowledge thee," "we recognize thee." Upon making the thank-offering of the first fruits, the farmer did not say, "I return thanks," but "I acknowledge this day before the Lord, that I am come into the land which the Lord swore unto our fathers to give to us." When Achan sinned, Joshua demanded a "confession" from him, using for *confession* the same word תורה usually translated by *thanks*.

And where may gratitude end? Only with the end of the debtor himself. A man ought never to allow himself to forget another's kindness towards him, nor believe that the act of benevolence has been fully repaid with a favor done the benefactor in return. Not alone should a man be ever thankful to the benefactor himself, but towards the latter's children, who may survive him, should he show his gratitude. He should say to himself, "This man's parents treated me in a most friendly manner; he shall reap the fruit of their kindness." A noble nature rather *over-* than *underestimates* the value of benefactions received; if it underestimates anything, it is its own return for kindnesses. The consciousness of an obligation is not a burden on the spirit of the grateful man; he rather finds pleasure in it from the assurance which his experience has given him that there are good men on earth, that the world is not so black as it is painted. The grateful man does not feel his indebtedness limited to the benefactor, but looks upon it as extending to all with whom he may come in contact. It prompts him to reason thus: "I have received benefits, I have been shown much kindness. Let me be equally friendly, whenever the opportunity presents itself. My fellow-man extended a helping-hand to me, when I was in distress, and it was pleasant to me. I now feel called upon not to hold back when I see others in trouble."

And as in your relations to individuals, so let it be with associations and congregations, with nations and countries. Whoever has dwelt under the protection of a community, and enjoyed its benefits, ought never to forget it. Even if he experience unkindness at its

hands, the memory of the good that he has enjoyed ought, nevertheless, not to pass from his mind. In regard to such circumstances, the Holy Scriptures declare, most clearly and emphatically: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land." In spite of the injustice that Israel had suffered, it was still not to forget that it had learned many useful things from the Egyptians; that it had dwelt in the land of Egypt. Israel was never to return to Egypt, the land of its oppression, but whenever the people might come in contact with an Egyptian, they were to treat him with kindness.

With every kindness that is shown us, every sacrifice made for our sake, every gift that we receive, we thus take upon ourselves a life-long obligation; grateful natures, therefore, are reluctant to make use of the kindness of others, when not absolutely unavoidable. The ungrateful man is like the thoughtless borrower, who makes use of all his credit; the payment of his debts does not trouble him. The ungrateful man lightly says, "I thank you," and, thereupon, considers his obligation discharged. The grateful man, on the other hand, is like the honest merchant, who has an aversion to making debts if he has not money sufficient at his disposal to cover the debt.

Gratitude is scarcely a virtue; it is rather an endowment of nature. Even beasts know gratitude. Isaiah, in reproaching Israel with ingratitude towards his God, says: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."

Indeed, in uncivilized man, in savages, we find it most strongly developed. Civilization refines the coarseness

of nature. In this refining process, however, many valuable, natural qualities are lost, among them gratitude. A cultured man, in the ordinary sense of the term, has not, by reason of his culture, gained in the power of gratitude; he is rather deficient in the development of this endowment. We find a deeper sense of gratitude in the wigwam, in the home of the unassuming citizen or farmer, than in the palaces of the great.

Nature has arranged that gratitude shall be the first subject of man's instruction in the school of life. On the very first day of our existence, we receive more benefits than we can repay in a whole lifetime. At best, a child may discharge the interest of its debt by means of life-long devotion, love, obedience and reverence to its benefactors, namely, its parents. Upon the first day of man's existence as a suckling, follow the days and years of the helplessness of childhood, days and years of boundless devotion on the part of his parents. This is the school in which nature teaches man to know gratitude. As the pupil, who learns to know his "Reader" well, applies his knowledge outside of the school-room, and reads other books, so he that has learnt to be grateful in the school of parental care and devotion, will be impelled to practise gratitude in other spheres of life.

So, too, the good citizen of the United States will never forget that France extended a helping hand to his country in its struggle for existence, and Israel will always retain a friendly feeling for Holland—the first modern state to permit Israel to lead a human existence.